

THE
LAMBETH JOINT REPORT
ON CHURCH UNITY
A DISCUSSION



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A DISCUSSION BY
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
GENERAL INTRODUCTION	7
A STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT	42
THE FREE CHURCHES AND REUNION	64
NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES	86
CATHOLICITY AND PRESBYTERY	105
A REPLY TO CRITICISM	126
APPENDIX A	150
„ B	159



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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

AT the Leicester Conference of the Church of England Men's Society in June, 1922, one of the objectives put before the members in their federations and branches was the promotion of the sacred cause of Christian Reunion. The question has already been taken up by the Society in many parts of the country, and reports have reached headquarters of the efforts made to spread the great idea among the ordinary rank and file of Christian people. One of the most remarkable was the series of mid-day lectures promoted by the City of London branch of the Society. The lectures were delivered on three Wednesdays in November and one in December, 1922, during the luncheon hour, and were well attended on each occasion, predominantly by City men. The speakers were all men of recognised eminence in the Churches to which they belong.

The Archbishop of York added to the many services which he has given to the Society during twenty-one years of leadership by himself introducing, as the basis of discussion, the now famous Report of the Joint Lambeth Committee,¹ over which he presided with conspicuous success. The only contributor to the present volume who did not appear at Wood Street is Dr. Carnegie Simpson. His duties at Cambridge unfortunately prevented him from coming to London during the University term. But it was felt that the subject could hardly claim to have been adequately treated if the Presbyterian standpoint was unrepresented. It happened that Dr. Simpson was about to take part in a somewhat similar series of addresses to be given during Advent in Bristol Cathedral, and, with the cordial approval of the Dean of Bristol, he very kindly consented that his words there spoken should be incorporated with this record of the Wood Street conferences. Had he been able, as he was generously willing, to be with us in the City, his address

¹ The Report, as subsequently accepted by the Joint Conference, is printed as Appendix A on p. 150.

would have differed in form. But his words at Bristol indicate his mind.

The general design of the course will be traced without much difficulty. The Archbishop, as Chairman of the Lambeth Joint Committee, expounds the significant document, which received the unanimous support of his colleagues on that Committee. Dr. Selbie, Dr. Scott Lidgett and Dr. Carnegie Simpson, all of whom are themselves members of the Joint Conference, and the two last of the Joint Committee also,¹ review the situation from the standpoint of the Free Churches, and yet—which is not the least interesting feature of their addresses—from angles which are not by any means the same, but differ with the experience of the speakers and the history of the communions they represent. And lastly, Dr. Headlam, now Bishop of Gloucester, whose Bampton Lectures of 1920 are a landmark in the history of the movement,² sums up the argument thus developed in an illuminating

¹ See p. 150.

² *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion*, by A. C. Headlam, D.D. (Longmans).

interpretation of those features of the Report on which it had been elicited by the discussion that further light was desired.

The purpose which the Committee had before them in organising these lectures, and which it is hoped that their publication will realise on a wider scale than is represented by the audience gathered in a City church, may be briefly indicated. It is to develop what the Archbishop calls a common mind in relation to a subject of vast spiritual importance among the rank and file of Christian people. In a paper recently issued by the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order,¹ it is asserted that "lay men and women have not yet, in sufficient numbers, been reached by the movement." And we are reminded that "reunion will come only by the action of the whole Church, and not merely those in official position." In all probability, the former of these statements ought to be enlarged so as to include among those who have not been vitally affected by the trend towards reunion not merely the general body of the laity, but

¹ See Appendix B, p. 159.

a large number of those who occupy an "official position" in the sense of having been admitted to the ordained ministry. For practical purposes, however, we may think of the rank and file of the Christian community, in which, of course, the lay people overwhelmingly predominate, as those whose sympathy and co-operation at the stage which the movement has now reached it is supremely important to engage.

We must try to make clear to ourselves what is meant by a common mind, and what is the necessity for it. Lord Balfour, in *The Foundations of Belief*, has an illuminating discussion on what he terms psychological climates. The general attitude towards particular questions varies, he says, according to the mental and moral atmosphere in which people approach them. Conditions change owing to the existence of causes which often have no direct relation to those questions. The instance he selects is the treatment of what are known as psychic phenomena. Whether for good or evil, the attitude which society to-day adopts towards spiritualism is entirely different from

what it was when, for example, Browning wrote Mr. Sludge the Medium. The same thing is to be observed in the political sphere. In the past seven or eight years we have witnessed developments in female citizenship and Irish self-government incredible a decade or two ago. In ecclesiastical life there have been similar changes. We speak of Christian Reunion as an ideal for which we still strive. And this is true enough. But changes are taking place before our eyes which are themselves progressive fulfilments of the end for which we work, and suggest the sort of way in which, as the common mind enlarges, yet further reconciliations will be accomplished. When, for example, the four Christian leaders who lectured at Wood Street were ordained to the ministry of their several Churches, say thirty or forty years ago, who would have predicted that, without conscious disloyalty to the position they have consistently maintained, and to which they still adhere, they would have succeeded one another in the pulpit of a City church, the use of which for that purpose is defended upon principles recognisably Anglican?

And this is typical of much that is happening to-day with general, if not universal, acceptance.

The truth is that there is already a common mind which did not exist thirty or twenty, or even ten, years ago. And it is this mind that must be still further developed before the federation or amalgamation, or whatever form the ultimate unification of Christian communions may assume, can take place on any large or extended scale. And this common mind is something far greater than a common sentiment. Feeling, no doubt, must enter into that common will to unite which is the ultimate impelling force. But something else is needed, and that is an intellectual element, what perhaps may be called a common understanding, based on knowledge and an adequate appreciation of the facts and problems involved.

A sentimental desire for fellowship among Christians, if it is not according to knowledge, will either end in the utterance of kindly words that lead nowhere, or produce, if it has any outcome at all, fresh confusion rather than the new order. The division between Eastern and Western Christians dates from the ninth century.

The parting of Western Christianity into the two main streams of Papalism and Protestantism has existed for three centuries. The leading British societies, with the exception of the Methodists, have continued in formal separation since the Act of Uniformity of 1662. And Methodism has more than a century of individual experience. Now, even if we dismiss those earlier and greater fissures, which yet can never be absent from the mind in attempts to repair the breaches of our British Christianity, it is none the less true that we have before us the results of many generations of separated Church life, and that nothing but clear thinking and patient comparison of experience will avail to put us in the way of reconstructing a broken unity. With the growth of organisations, all called by the name of Church, yet operating over the same field and often in direct antagonism the one to the other, fundamental issues have been confused, and the values attachable to the very conception of the Church grown variable and uncertain. It becomes doubtful how far there is a common mind at all. Certainly it has no articulate expression.

Two people, it may be, are discussing the question, suggested by the very mention of Christian unity, namely, the "validity" of Orders. They soon discover not only that they can reach no agreement, but that they have not even any common ground from which to define the point where difference begins. They find themselves wandering in a maze of argument, involved in all manner of issues not directly related to the matter in hand. They can establish no contact. They cannot do business with each other at all. Probably the reason is that they have no common mind on the nature of the Church. If one believes that the Church is invisible, known only to God, and that what are commonly called churches are merely voluntary associations of individual Christians for worship and edification, while to the other the Church is not only a visible but a constitutional society of divine appointment for the salvation of mankind, it is obvious that no atmosphere exists in which the representatives of these two theories can profitably discuss, far less reach a satisfactory conclusion on, a problem which involves the adjustment of

ministries. But for most of us the position is not sharply defined. The vast majority even of Christian people have no clear vision of what they suppose the Church to be. They have never thought out the implications of their own position, far less attempted to explore and grasp the position of others. They do not know where they agree and where, as at present advised, they are bound to differ. In a word, they have no common mind.

It is here that Dr. Scott Lidgett's admirable exposition in the third of these lectures, of the conception of the Church as it appears in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, is of great value and importance. Indeed, that lecture might well be read before any of the others, because it is precisely these principles which are expressed in the first section of the Report of the Joint Conference. If it be agreed among those who are working towards reunion that the Church is in its origin a divine creation, and in its essential being a fact of the spiritual realm; that, nevertheless, it finds expression in the visible order and that this expression is neither perfect nor, it may be,

capable of becoming so, but realises itself progressively as the body grows towards the measure of its fulness in Christ—if we can agree about this, then we have a common mind from which it is possible to advance to a consideration of the methods through which the divinely-created spiritual fact of the Church gains this visible expression. We can discuss matters of order and church polity, of creeds and confessions. These things have their values, not in the realm of reality, but in that sphere of outward manifestation in which reality finds its true, albeit its incomplete, expression. The adjustment of these things becomes vital when we see clearly that what we are taking in hand, and what alone we are competent to handle, is that visible unity of the Church which it is necessary to secure, first, that the world may believe that the Father has sent the Son, and, secondly, that the corporate witness and activity of the Christian fellowship may have its due influence upon human society. The fundamental unity of all the members of the one body, which exists through faith in Christ, must be assumed

as already binding together those who are seeking the best, nay, the divinely-appointed method by which it should express itself in the external world.

It is most important that we should get a clear idea of what is meant by the common mind, because it represents the method which is being followed not only by the Lambeth Committee, not only by the wider movement towards Christian reunion of which it is a particular instance,¹ but by other great movements as well which concern the bearing of Christianity upon world problems. It is obvious, for example, that the industrial and economic troubles of the day continue unappeased, not because such an evil as unemployment is not fully recognised by all, but because those who above all things desire a speedy solution of the difficulty are yet not of one mind on the larger question of those general principles which ought to govern the development of the social order. And what we Christians need to inquire is not how to find the answer to practical problems which involve the special

¹ See Appendix B, p. 159.

knowledge of the social scientist or the economist, but what the mind of Christ is when it is put alongside those questions of politics, economics and citizenship which afford the material of our modern perplexities ; to ascertain how that mind should express itself ; in other words, to arrive at a common Christian mind in relation to these things. That is the purpose of the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship, which is to meet at Birmingham in 1924. It is to reach a common Christian mind, based upon an accurate interpretation of Christianity on the one hand, and upon precise knowledge of the modern world on the other ; and neither to frame policies nor to indicate methods. It is the same work which is now being done in the kindred sphere of Christian reunion.

It follows from what has just been said that the language in which, as in the Lambeth Joint Report, it is sought to give expression to the common mind will describe an attitude rather than define a position, and in consequence must not be invested with anything like the precision of a legal document. It will no

doubt present many apparent ambiguities, not because terms have been deliberately used to cover up essential differences, but because it is designedly employed to make clear, first to ourselves and then to those from whom we differ, how far we already agree, and where further explanation is still necessary. The aim is not compromise, but comprehension, and that in a sense more vital than what was once attempted in the abortive effort to embrace the dissenters of 1689 within the pale of the English Establishment.

It is worth while to recall what took place in the reign of William and Mary in order to show how the vision of the United Church, towards which the modern movement is directed, contrasts with the idea which signally failed to materialise in the period immediately succeeding the Revolution. To begin with, the scheme of "Comprehension" then promulgated had its origin in political rather than religious considerations. The King himself, reared in Continental Protestantism and indifferent to the distinctions separating Churchman from Dissenter, was a prime mover in the

matter. A Bill for Union, or Comprehension, was introduced into the House of Lords and passed. In the Commons it fared differently. The members of the Lower House were unwilling to consent to a measure concerning which the Church had not previously been formally consulted, and gained the consent of the other Chamber in petitioning the King to summon a Convocation of the Clergy. This was done, but at the same time a Commission of divines was instructed by the Crown to prepare a scheme for submission to both Houses of Convocation. The clergy proved intractable and the project was dropped.

Now, what was it that was then proposed? Not to bring together separated communions, but so to manipulate and modify the machinery of the Church of England in respect of its formularies of faith, order and worship as to remove the objections which had led to the organisation of Nonconformists in societies outside the Established Church. The proposed changes were promoted by men like Tillotson, Tenison and Burnet, whose view was that fundamental Christianity was entirely

separable from those points of controversy which had divided the nation into distinct, and to a great extent hostile, bodies, and who consequently had no adequate conception of religious communities as living organisms embodying a common spirit and experience. If they had succeeded in their object an institution would have been constructed which really represented the religious life of no one, to which Dissenters must still have conformed as individuals, their ministers submitting to a re-ordination administered conditionally to save their faces; while those Anglicans who were not "latitude-men"—that is, the general body both of clergy and laity—would scarcely have recognised in the remodelled constitution the Church in which they had been nurtured and for which many of them had suffered.

The great movement we have lived to witness is wholly different in character. The suggestion has not come from the side of the State. It has not even been inaugurated by the Church of England, for the Lambeth Conference represents, not the Church of England, but the whole family of Churches throughout

the world in communion with it. Its outlook is as wide as Christendom itself, embracing alike the ancient communions of East and West, the Protestant Churches of Europe, and all the sections into which British Christianity has been divided from the Reformation onwards. Practical considerations, and practical considerations alone, limit the extent of its activity. It is only the official claim of the Roman Communion to be the whole Catholic Church, and the attitude of isolation consequent upon it, that for the present places this great society outside the field of operations. And if the Society of Friends and the Unitarians do not come within its scope, this is, as the Archbishop and Dr. Headlam alike point out, because the view of order characteristic of the former and of declarations of faith adopted by the latter give no sufficient points of contact for the expression of a common mind. So long as it is recognised that the real and essential unity of the Church rests upon living fellowship with Christ, and that the utmost that outward order can achieve is an ever-increasing approximation to the full ex-

pression of this vital fact, can we be wrong in saying that, whatever reservations have to be made, this movement is an appeal to all Churches acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and King, to enter into conference, without prejudice to any part of what they believe to be their several witness, with a view to the realisation, in outward fellowship no less than in essential unity, of that great Church which shall incorporate the experience of all?

The vision of the reunited congregation which this ideal involves is not that of Aaron's rod swallowing up all the other rods, such as might commend itself to the institutional enthusiasm of an Ignatius Loyola. Nor yet is it that of a community shedding all the idiosyncrasies of existing denominations and standing for nothing more than the least common denominator of all the churches. Nor yet, once again, is it an ecclesiastical Noah's ark, affording accommodation for animals of incompatible theological habits. The United Church, as it is now envisaged, is a society in which the Methodist will recognise a true succession with the Connexion which produced

the witness of Morley Punshon and Watkinson and Hugh Price Hughes ; in which the Congregationalist shall still feel himself the spiritual son of Binney and Dale and Parker ; in which the Baptist shall not renounce the memory of Charles Spurgeon and Alexander Maclaren ; in which the Presbyterian shall still count as his sires such men as Samuel Rutherford and Ebenezer Erskine, Thomas Chalmers and Norman Macleod ; while to the Anglican the heritage of Andrewes and Jeremy Taylor, Pusey and Liddon, is transmitted whole and unimpaired. And so we may go on to include the tradition, the experience, the continuity of all the other churches as they blend, without loss of identity, in the unity of the great Church. No question here of absorption or return ; no question of inequality in the terms of approach the one to the other ; no question of compromise as the price of reunion. Nothing like this has been witnessed in Christendom before. It is a positive and not a negative ideal. In its very nature it presents problems which cannot be cleared up in a day. It is probable, for example, that no scheme of reunion between

the Anglican Communion and the Congregational Churches could at this moment be devised which did not do violence to the genius and convictions of the one or the other. And, what is more, no one can yet predict in what form such a scheme might eventually be presented. There is only one way by which the conditions can be established, in which union between one church and another becomes at last inevitable, and the appropriate method of securing it immediately discernible, and that is by a close and sympathetic intercourse ; by a more exact analysis of the truth and the experience which each possesses ; and by the development from stage to stage of a common mind.

Until the last stage of this evolution is reached, that is, until the common mind is seen to be so complete and to work out in so many directions that the churches sharing it can proceed to an act of union which is recognised as not a compromise but a synthesis of what, when the process of attraction began, might have appeared almost as contradictory ideals—until that stage is reached, it is all but inevitable that the language in which agreement is

stated should appear fraught with ambiguity. And why? Because the parties assenting to it have entered into conference without prejudice to apparently conflicting positions. The Principal of Mansfield, in his illuminating statement of the attitude which the average Free Churchman is likely to assume towards the Report of the Joint Committee, and of the questions he will naturally ask, makes this clear. Dr. Selbie, for example, himself says that "if the Anglo-Catholic view of church traditions and of orders and of episcopacy is to prevail, it is quite incredible that we shall be able to come to anything like an agreement."

Now, it is of the utmost importance, if the common mind is to extend itself to the rank and file of the churches, that these things should be put frankly and without reserve. Dr. Selbie has earned our gratitude by so doing. But it will readily be perceived that if it had been a representative Anglo-Catholic, and not a representative Free Churchman who was criticizing the document, we should have found him suggesting a reverse series of questions, and declaring that agreement seemed to

him impossible if the Free Church mind were to prevail. The truth, however, is that there is no real ambiguity in the terms of the Report at all, which asserts that the ministry of the reunited Church must be one in the sense of possessing the authority of the whole Church, but neither pronounces nor seeks to pronounce upon the conditions which would satisfy this requirement. On the contrary, it removes ambiguities; those, that is, which concern the nature of the Church, and which, so long as they remain, render further inquiry fruitless. We may unreservedly acknowledge that if in the event Free Churchmen are unwilling to admit any modification in the mode of ordination, while Anglicans insist upon the reordination of non-episcopal ministers as a condition of union, the agreement already reached can have no issue and may even cease to exist. But these are not the indications of the probable course of discussion that are apparent in the Report itself. And if there is a growing appreciation of the character of the United Church, as it is here outlined, if it is increasingly felt that, on practical grounds alone, the

ministry of that Church must include, under whatever limitations, the episcopal along with other elements; if, lastly, there is an ever-deepening sense of the senselessness and sin of division, it is surely incredible that untiring thought and persevering prayer will fail at last to show the way.

There is one thing, at least, which the attentive study of these lectures ought to force upon us, and that is the importance of clearing up our own ideas. There is nothing that more certainly darkens counsel and hinders mutual understanding than a loose and inaccurate use of familiar words and phrases. Two of these necessarily in the mind of all who consider the question of Christian Reunion are *Ordination* and *Apostolic Succession*.

Ordination, as the etymology of the word shows, is admission to the order of ministers. It can mean nothing else. We may or may not allow that the traditional rite of the imposition of hands is the necessary method. We may or may not require that this rite should be administered by a bishop. That the act or instrument by which is conveyed authority to

preach the Word of God and administer the Sacraments is what is meant by ordination represents the only use of the term which is historically accurate. Some might prefer, with Dr. Selbie, to use the word "Commission" to designate the act of the Church, and to describe it with him as "the human ratification" of a divine appointment, though the phrase is curious. But surely *vocation* rather than *ordination* is the appropriate term to express that call of God to which faith surrenders, and which would be universally held to be necessary if even the most solemn action on earth is in the fullest sense to be ratified in heaven. Nor, however imperfect the tests actually applied, is it likely that any would deny that before a candidate for the ministry is set apart for his office the Church should be assured, so far as is humanly possible, that he who is commissioned is indeed called of God? Nevertheless, so far as the order of the Church is concerned, that man is an ordained minister who acts in this capacity under authority regularly committed to him. And it is with this, and with this only, whether it be called Ordination or

Commission or Recognition, that we are concerned in this relation.

Then there is the phrase *Apostolic Succession*. This appears much more easy to define than in fact it is. Many High Churchmen might be content to say that it meant the transmission of the grace or gift of ministry from one generation to another through the imposition of episcopal hands. This may be all very well as a rule of thumb. If it be held that no "valid" ministry can exist save as it is conferred by bishops, you have, of course, only to ask, "By what bishop was this man ordained?" in order to determine whether he is in the ranks of the ministry or not. But it is doubtful whether anyone who has read such a book as Gore's *Church and the Ministry*, or Moberly's *Ministerial Priesthood*, would be satisfied with this answer. For, in fact, it begs the question. It supplies no answer to the inquiry, Why should the gift or grace of ministry be restrained to episcopal ordination? Is not Dr. Headlam right when he maintains that Apostolic Succession can only mean that a ministry to which it is applied possesses the

authority of the whole Church? Was it not in order to perpetuate in the Church of England a guarantee of continuity in the ministry, and of that authority which continuity assures, that the episcopate was carefully preserved in the old canonical form? If so, then it is surely here that we must look for the precise meaning of Apostolic Succession. It means the devolution of the ministerial office by recognised and regular method, so that those who are ordained exercise an authority which belongs not to the particular church or congregation in and through which they received it, but to the catholic and apostolic Church of Christ.

This is at once apparent from the English Ordinal. The presbyter ordained according to that book purports to have been made a "priest in the Church of God" according to the use, or rite, of the Church of England. A similar claim, as Dr. Carnegie Simpson points out—and that, as those who have any real knowledge of the churches in question are aware, with perfect justice—is made on behalf of the Presbyterian ministry. And whether or not the universal character of ministry is as

explicitly asserted in ordination as practised by other non-episcopal communions, it is difficult to suppose that the jealousy with which the idea of re-ordination, or even of conditional ordination, is repudiated by the Free Churches generally, can be justified on any other ground.

The importance of getting this point clear cannot be exaggerated if the statement of the Joint Report on the subject of the Ministry is to be justly appreciated. No fundamental difference exists with regard either to the nature of the spiritual gift or the catholic character of ministry. It is concerned solely with the conditions under which a given ministry may rightly claim a universal character. For Episcopalians, as the term implies, the Episcopate is "accepted as the means whereby the authority of the whole body is given." For Presbyterians, it is "the Council of Presbyters,"¹ while among Congregationalists it is

¹ In 1882, two Congregational ministers were admitted by the General Assembly as ministers of the Church of Scotland without any further commission, but the experiment, we are told, has never been repeated, because it was felt to be doubtful whether the procedure was in strict accord with the constitution of the Church.

“the Congregation of the faithful” which must recognise, attest and ratify what is believed to be the man’s vocation before he proceeds to the exercise of his calling. If objection is taken to any ministry, it is not a question of nullity, but of irregularity, that is involved. But the history of the Christian Church being what it is—the Episcopate, that is, having been from early times and for many centuries accepted, and by the greater part of Christendom being still accepted, as the pivot on which the ministry turns—it is to be expected that a large section of the members of episcopal churches will always cherish high views concerning it. The same will probably hold good, as it does to-day, though doubtless to a less extent, with regard to churches of the Presbyterian polity. The fact is that, while it is comparatively easy to agree that both Church and Ministry being essentially one, the visible expression of both ought to be one also, the problems of Biblical interpretation and historical inquiry, on which will depend a final and definite answer to the question, of what constitutes a regular ministry, are too involved and uncertain to admit of a solution which

would remove doubt from all reasonable minds. It is probable that "a common mind" in this matter is neither desirable nor possible.

What the Joint Report in effect says amounts to this : we have arrived at a common mind, and we desire that the churches generally should share this mind, that the ministry of the reunited Church must possess the authority of the whole Church. The question of reunion is not one that can be determined by a general conference, however representative, but remains for the decision of particular churches, or groups of churches, which have reached the point at which their members generally desire organic union. The problem of the ministry arises when the churches so negotiating possess different polities. This should be obvious on practical grounds alone. If the one church distributes the functions of the ministry among, say, seven orders, while the other concentrates them in one, plainly something must be done to equate the two systems for mutual service. For the purposes of the union immediately contemplated, "the whole church" means both of the uniting bodies and the larger body that will

result from their union. Now, if the ministry of one only was to become the ministry of the united church, while the ministry of the other must cease to function unless a new commission be sought from that of the other, this would not be a combination of authority, for one of the two churches would in fact be absorbed in the other and cease to exist. But what if both should reason as follows? "Our eyes are on the future rather than on the past. We know that God has blessed us and that through the ministry of Word and Sacraments, as practised among us, sinners have been saved and saints edified. We have no wish to disparage another church, but we do wish that henceforth our experience should be linked up with theirs. Henceforth we join with them and they with us in the commissioning and setting apart of our pastors.¹ Henceforth ministry as exercised among ourselves shall have the authority of the other church, and ministry as exercised in it shall have the

¹ Careful consideration should be given to what Dr. Headlam says (p. 140) concerning the ordination of priests for particular "rites," as suggesting how the temporary but difficult problem of those already ordained at the date of union might be handled.

authority of ours. If, as compared between themselves, there is defect on one side or the other—about which, however, we do not inquire—for the future it is remedied.”

Such appears to be the mind expressed in the document which forms the basis of these lectures. If, after carefully studying the idea of the Church, as outlined in the New Testament, which is the subject of the third lecture, the reader will return to the Archbishop's exposition of the Joint Report, considering it in the light of the further explanations it receives from Dr. Headlam's commentary on the criticisms of the average Free Churchman, as suggested by Dr. Selbie, he will come to perceive its bearings on various practical aspects of the great problem which is its theme. The Anglo-Catholic will then be able, with some knowledge of the real scope of the argument, to put to himself the question whether the sort of solution here indicated really does compromise the principle of Apostolic Succession, and the Evangelical Free Churchman whether it would commit him to an abatement, if not an abandonment, of the witness inherited from his fathers.

Two things need to be said in conclusion. The first is that the matter in hand is not one for academic discussion, but for practical consideration. It deals not with the Reunion of Christendom, but with the Report of the Joint Committee. We must not allow ourselves to be diverted from following out the live issues which have been raised by any attempt to dangle the red herring of reconciliation with Rome, or even of *rapprochement* with the Orthodox East. With regard to the latter, so great is our mutual knowledge and sympathy that reunion is no longer a mere pious aspiration. But the problem of the relations of foreign churches to one another and of the groups of British Christians among themselves are widely different, and must be separately considered. With respect to Rome, the present writer feels bound to say that in his judgment it must be frankly and definitely asserted that no question of reunion at present exists, and that to insist on speaking and acting as though it did is only to queer the pitch for an issue already within the range of practical politics.

The second and last thing that needs to

be emphasised is the importance of creating opportunities on a considerably larger scale than has been hitherto attempted, for common intercourse in the things of the spirit, more especially between Anglicans and Free Churchmen. Social relations springing out of causes that are not religious will not carry us very far. Co-operation in public work, or in the promotion of moral and humanitarian ideals held in common, will not in itself suffice. Dr. Selbie has deplored the ignorance which has been responsible for much misunderstanding and consequent misrepresentation, but which a little real knowledge of one another might easily have avoided. He has told us how at the Lambeth Committees the members "met at first on opposite sides of a table, and there was a feeling of antagonism" which passed away as fellowship grew. But even that is not enough. It is not enough to discuss differences when men are assured, because they speak often one to another, of their deep and fundamental agreement. Dr. Carnegie Simpson hit the mark in his address at Bristol when he told his audience that he wished he could have used the opportunity then afforded

him of speaking in an English cathedral, to speak "not about ecclesiastical politics, but about something nearer the heart of our faith and life." Yes. That is where the real need lies. We want to hear each other's message and to know "the man and his communication," and not merely to read in cold print what he has to deliver about the Fact of Christ.

Here and there we hear of a cathedral where a religious teacher not in Holy Orders of the Church of England has been invited to the pulpit. But in spite of the Lambeth recommendation,¹ there is still something of the freak of a Low Church dean or a Broad Church chapter about the proceeding. The great Scottish preacher, John Caird, once lectured in the nave of Westminster Abbey. But that was many years ago. Father Nicolai, now Bishop of Okrida in Serbia, is the only person not of the Anglican clergy who has ever preached under the dome of St. Paul's, and he, of course, was an Orthodox priest.

¹ The Lambeth Conference of 1920 expressly approved of such invitations being from time to time extended under episcopal authority to ministers of other denominations known to be working towards reunion on the lines indicated in the Lambeth appeal.

Dr. James Cooper, whose death at the end of 1922 removed from among us a lifelong worker in the cause of reunion, addressed a select audience in the Crypt when he was Moderator of the General Assembly. The time has now come when what I would call these courtesies, if they were not something much more, should be systematically recognised and practised as in no way inconsistent with strict loyalty to Anglican principles. The rubrical sermon at Holy Communion may be fittingly reserved for the official utterances of fully accredited preachers. But many opportunities are available for others to enjoy the liberty of prophesying, and that to the great advantage of the congregations to whom they are invited to minister.

If the great thing for which we pray is indeed to be accomplished, we must learn to throw ourselves back more securely and more courageously upon that Church of the Redeemer, imperfectly manifested in the visible society, which exists, one and indivisible, in the realm of reality beyond.

A STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT

BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

THE Lambeth Appeal to all Christian people on the subject of reunion, which was issued in 1920, marked, as you know, a new stage in the evolution of the old, difficult, yet ever urgent problem of the recovery of the lost unity of the Church of Christ. It certainly had a great effect at the time. It was not that it said anything that was very new, but men felt that what was said was said in a new tone. They recognised the unfolding of a new vision. They saw the possibility of a new beginning. In a situation which had become an *impasse* a new door of hope seemed to have been opened. Nor was the effect of the Appeal merely a nine days' wonder. It was translated into at least nine foreign languages and conveyed to the heads of the Roman and Orthodox Churches and the authorities of Protestant communions in

England and Scotland and throughout the world. Everywhere there was a quickening of movement. The Eastern Church at once, and in many ways, strengthened its desire for a closer union with the Anglican Church throughout the whole world. The Patriarch of Constantinople registered his conclusion in favour of the validity of the Anglican Orders, and requested the other Patriarchs to agree with his decision. And I desire here, on this fateful day, to record our sympathy with the Christians in Constantinople; and with that expression of sympathy with the Patriarch and our fellow-Christians, I would combine the expression of a very earnest and serious hope that the Government of this country, when it enters the forthcoming Peace Conference, will, with its Allies, make sure that our honour and our pledges shall not be set aside, and that adequate protection shall be given to the minorities in Asia Minor and Constantinople. Other movements towards union are being carried on in many European countries, in our Dominions, in India, and in China. But I am limited to-day to a consideration of our relations with our fellow-

Christians in England grouped under the title of the Evangelical Free Churches.

Yet, to prevent misunderstanding, let me say that we must not forget that the Lambeth Appeal is not in any way limited in its scope to our fellow-Christians in England. It embraces the ancient Episcopal Communions in the East and West, with which ours is bound by many ties of common faith and tradition. The recent call to reunion, given by that veteran of the cause, Lord Halifax, whatever may be thought of his ardent hopes, and of the obstacles in the way which at present may seem to be insuperable, is a reminder that to the eye of faith no true and full vision of reunion can leave out the great Roman Catholic Church. No plan of reunion could meet the needs of the Church or of the world which shut out the possibility that, in the patient Providence of God, this vision may one day be fulfilled.

But in England the way of approach is open, and we are in it. The stage so far reached is marked by the Report of the Conference on Church Unity which was held this year at

Lambeth Palace.¹ It is of this statement that I have been asked specially to speak. Allow me to offer one or two preliminary observations:—

(1) The history of this document. In September 1921 the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches appointed a number of their most influential members to confer with the two Archbishops and such other members of the Church of England as they might appoint. The response of the Archbishops was ready and eager. They appointed nine Bishops to meet the representatives of the Federal Council, to whom were subsequently added Dr. Headlam, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and Dr. Walter Frere. The Conference met at Lambeth on November 30, 1921.

I ask you to mark the significance of what immediately happened. It was at once realised by all that unless some foundation were laid of at least understanding, and if possible of agreement, upon certain large and ultimate principles, discussion would only beat the air.

¹ Published by the S.P.C.K. under the title of *Church Unity*. See p. 150.

I say this was significant. It was a welcome recognition that any real approach to unity must start from some common conception of Truth: that it is upon Truth in the last resort and not upon compromise, that policy must be based. A sub-committee was appointed charged with the very difficult task of considering some of these large questions of principle. It consisted of six members of the Church of England: the Bishops of Gloucester, Peterborough, Ripon and Salisbury, with Dr. Headlam and Dr. Frere, and six members of the Free Churches: Dr. J. D. Jones, Dr. Garvie, Dr. Scott Lidgett, Prof. A. S. Peake, Dr. Carnegie Simpson, Dr. J. H. Shakespeare—a company at once representative and able. I had the honour and privilege of being chairman of that committee. It held long meetings at Lambeth in January, March and April of this year. It decided to consider chiefly the three following subjects: (I) The nature of the Church; (II) The nature of the Ministry; (III) The place of the Creeds in a United Church; truly questions going to the root of the matter. It presented its report

in the form of a series of propositions on these three subjects (to which its members had given their unanimous agreement) to the larger Conference on May 24. After full discussion, the Conference gave its unanimous approval to those propositions in the form now published.

(2) Notice the limitations of this document. It is expressly stated that the propositions which the report contains are not intended as a complete statement of the great subjects with which they deal; nor even as expressing what individual members of the Conference or the Churches which they represent might regard as a full statement of their own positions. They are submitted simply as expressing substantially the very large measure of agreement which, after full and frank discussion, the Conference had been enabled to reach. I would emphasise this limitation, for criticism has been made in Anglican quarters that the statement does not cover the whole ground of the truth as it is held by the Anglican Church: still less of the truth as it is held by many members of that Church. Of course it does not. If it did there would be no

problem to consider. Since there is a problem, and a most difficult one, the first step, on which all others depend, is to secure at least agreement on great fundamental issues. That this statement does measure a remarkable agreement on just such fundamental issues I hope to show you presently. That is the main point. The temperament which cannot get beyond the horns of the dilemma "All or nothing," can make no way in the quest either of unity or of truth.

Again, it has sometimes been said that it is useless to formulate points of agreement when the points of acute difference are left untouched. On that criticism I have three comments to make. One is, that the statement expressly acknowledges that "many matters of great importance are not dealt with by it, and that these must be" (and, I may add, will be) "the subject of further discussion." Secondly, I would say that it is the way of folly on entering any serious and purposeful conference to throw down at once the challenge of the most contentious matters. It is the way of wisdom to prepare the way for

the discussion of these matters by reaching an agreement about the principles upon which their solution must depend. This is the way which this Conference chose. Thirdly, the measure of agreement reached does cover matters on which there have been the most acute differences—differences which have been largely responsible for the divisions of Christendom.

(3) The general character of the statement : It is an attempt to reach, not words, but Truth. We are accustomed, in these days, perhaps too much accustomed, to the phrase, "Finding a formula." If, indeed, the formula is one which secures real agreement on vital points, to find it is a great achievement. But a formula, however skilful, which merely avoids the rupture of negotiations by artfully concealing unresolved differences is a mere makeshift. If this were the real character of the Statement, it would, indeed, be poor stuff. But I can truly say of the Committee over which I presided that its one concern was to find, not a formula, but a common mind, an agreement upon vital principles. It seemed to me very little like a

company of diplomatists negotiating a passable compromise. It was to me much more like a comradeship of men seeking to find the truth under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Having made these preliminary observations in order to explain the nature of the Statement and to anticipate criticisms which have been or may be passed upon it, let me try to summarise its main points. It can only be a summary. I would beg of you all to obtain a copy of the Statement, and read it, and keep it, and study it for yourselves. I do not think any one can be in line with the movements of his Church unless he possesses this Statement.

First, then, *On the Nature of the Church*. The first proposition laid down is all-important ; indeed, it is the basis upon which the whole structure rests. There are two fundamental conceptions of the Church, between which a decisive choice must be made. Is it created by an association of men, or of societies of men, who accept the Gospel declared by Christ, or give their allegiance to His teaching and example ; or is it created by God, a Body or organism of which Christ Himself is the con-

stitutive principle, which men do not form, but into which they are brought? Is it based upon the assent of men, or societies of men, to the Gospel as God's redemptive purpose for mankind; or is it itself part of that Gospel, part of that redemptive purpose?

The first conception is quite intelligible. It has been in history, and is still, widely held, and it underlies a great deal of modern thinking and speaking about the Church. But it is not compatible with the second. A choice must be made. The whole problem of the unity of the Church depends upon that choice. The statement before us makes its decisive choice:

"The foundation of the Church rests not upon the will or consent or beliefs of men, whether as individuals or as societies, but upon the creative Will of God."

A great theologian has said that if that were accepted there ought to be no fundamental obstacle to reunion. From this premiss conclusions of vital moment follow. The Church is one, and there can be but one Church. This one divinely-ordained Church has on earth its visible expression—the visible Church (I. 4 and 5).

This visible Church must possess certain visible and recognisable marks by which it can be seen and known by men (I. 6). Accordingly, this visible Church, by virtue of its essential character, its oneness in Christ, ought to be visibly one. Its unity is therefore not a matter of human desire, but of divine purpose, and therefore of divine obligation. Accordingly, the only true *raison d'être* of local churches is that they should be local representatives of the one Church. The existence of churches independent of and even rivalling one another in the same place is not in accordance with the purpose of Christ (I. 9). Thus the very use of the word "churches," however natural, for the purpose of convenience or courtesy, is itself a rebuke and a reminder that we have drifted into a wholly abnormal condition, and are called to restore the true position in accordance with the purpose of the Lord. Then follows a paragraph which I must read. It is written in language which is very careful and very compressed. It would require a separate lecture to unfold what is implied within it. It does not and cannot make judgments as to the status

of existing "churches," but it expresses the principles by which those judgments should be made:

(I. 10) "The marks which ought to characterise the Church visible on earth are possessed by these existing separate churches and societies of Christian people in very varying degrees of completeness or defect. Hence, even though they be parts of the visible Church, they cannot be considered as all alike giving equally adequate expression to the Lord's Mind and Purpose. Some, indeed, may be so defective that they cannot rightly be judged to be parts of that Church. But such judgments, though made in trust that they are in accordance with the Divine Mind, must be regarded as limited to the sphere of the visible Church as an ordered society here on earth. It would be presumption to claim that they have a like validity in the sphere of the whole Church as the One Body of the redeemed in Christ, for within that sphere judgment can only be given by the All-knowing Mind and Sovereign Mercy of God."

These are fundamental principles. They go

to the root of the matter. If there is agreement upon them, there may be agreement all along the line.

Second, *The Nature of the Ministry*: Here again we are confronted by two fundamental conceptions between which a decisive choice must be made. Is a ministry of Word and Sacrament a mere matter of human convenience, natural, indeed, and important, but still a matter to be regulated simply by the desires of various groups or churches? If so, the unity of the Church is not dependent upon questions as to the nature and authority of its Ministry. These are questions which various societies are free to settle for themselves. Or, on the other hand, is a Ministry of Word and Sacrament a divine ordinance for the Church—an integral part of its organised life? If so, then the authority of its Ministry becomes a matter of vital importance. The Statement here again makes its choice:

“A Ministry of the Word and Sacrament is a divine ordinance for the Church, and has been since the days of the Apostles an integral part of its organised life” (II. 1).

It goes on to say that such a Ministry must be regarded as a Ministry of the Church, and not merely of any part thereof (II. 3). Though exercising representatively powers and functions which are inherent in the Church itself, it does so by the authority of the Lord Who is its Head (II. 2). The authority of the Church is, so to say, mediated by those who have authority given to them in the Church to confer it. In response to faith and prayer, Divine Grace is given through the ordination by which it is conferred.

Now, plainly, if this be the character of the Ministry, it must surely follow that, in view of all the differences which have been developed in history, there must be means, in a reunited Church, whereby its ministry may be acknowledged by every part thereof as possessing the authority of the whole body. This is a matter so important that I must read the actual words :

“Within the many Christian Communion into which in the course of history Christendom has been divided, various forms of ministry have grown up according to the circumstances of these several Communion and their beliefs

as to the Mind of Christ and the guidance of the New Testament. These various ministries of Word and Sacrament have been, in God's providence, manifestly and abundantly used by the Holy Spirit in His work of 'enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints.' But the differences which have arisen with regard to the authority and functions of these various forms of ministry have been and are the occasion of manifold doubts, questions and misunderstandings. For the allaying of doubts and scruples in the future, and for the more perfect realisation of the truth that the ministry is a ministry of the Church, and not merely of any part thereof, means should be provided for the United Church which we desire, whereby its ministry may be acknowledged by every part thereof as possessing the authority of the whole body" (II. 7).

Then follow two statements which must be kept together ; and which together seem to me to lift many old and bitter controversies to a new level from which a new and hopeful advance may be made. No thoughtful man can fail to see their far-reaching significance :

“In view of the fact that the Episcopate was from early times and for many centuries accepted, and by the greater part of Christendom is still accepted, as the means whereby this authority of the whole body is given, we agree that it ought to be accepted as such for the United Church of the future.”

“Similarly, in view of the place which the Council of Presbyters and the Congregation of the faithful had in the constitution of the early Church, and the preservation of these elements of presbyteral and congregational order in large sections of Christendom, we agree that they should be maintained with a representative and constitutional Episcopate as permanent elements in the order and life of the United Church” (II. 8, 9).

These declarations in their combination illustrate the great principle of the Lambeth Appeal—that the now separated churches have their own special contribution to make to the fulness of the whole Church. If there is new hope in the willingness of non-episcopal Christians to recognise a true place and meaning of the Episcopate, is there not also new hope in the

movements now at work among us who possess that Episcopate to combine it with a better representative system in which the Synods of the Presbyters and the Councils of the laity have their place? Is it too much to say that these declarations mark a stage in the long and difficult road towards unity farther on than any stage which has hitherto been reached? They lead to a starting point for a new stage in the journey in which many old difficulties may be left behind and many others solved as we go.

The acceptance of such a starting point would not, so the Statement (II. 10) says, imply the disowning of past ministries which have been, in fact, manifestly used and blessed by the Spirit of God. Nor would it imply the acceptance of any particular theory of the origin or character of Episcopal Ordination. We Anglicans do not impose any such theory on our own candidates for ordination, and all theories are being modified by fuller research into the records of the past. But surely those who, for the reasons summarised in this Statement, believe that the visible unity of the Church requires, in fact, such a common authority for the Ministry, will come to see in

it part of God's providential ordering of His Church.

Lastly—*The Place of the Creed in a United Church*. This section of the Statement is very closely compressed, and I have no time even to comment on all that is involved within it. When its phrases are duly pondered and rightly understood the agreement disclosed must be taken to be most remarkable. There are currents of thought among the Free Churches and even within our own Church which represent the Church as merely a company of seekers after Truth, which resent what are called "credal obligations" and question the worth of any objective standard of Truth. But the Statement clearly recognises that there can be no real unity of the Church unless there is a unity of Faith (III. 1). And that this implies both the subjective element of personal adhesion and an objective standard of Truth. The supreme standard is the revelation of God contained in the Scriptures, and summed up in Jesus Christ. But, in addition to this, the United Church must have a formal statement of its corporate faith in Christ and a sufficient statement of this corporate

faith is to be found in the Nicene Creed (III. 7) :

“When assent to the Creeds is required by the United Church, such assent should not be understood to imply the acceptance of them as a complete expression of the Christian Faith, or as excluding reasonable liberty of interpretation. It should be understood to imply the acceptance of them as agreeable to the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures, as affirming essential elements in the Christian Faith, and as preserving that Faith in the form in which it has been handed down through many centuries in the history of the Christian Church.”

Yet with this recognition of the rightful place of a creed in a united Church must go the full and thankful recognition of the continued presence and teaching of the Living Spirit in His Body, giving in each day and generation ever-renewed guidance in the apprehension and expression of the Truth (III. 8).

So I close this summary of a summary. However bald the presentation of it has been, you cannot have failed to realise that it stands

for an agreement most striking—I think it might be said unprecedented. You will have felt that almost every clause includes, and would, if it were generally accepted, conclude controversies which have long divided and embittered Christian men. And I bid you remember that this agreement was reached by men entitled to represent traditions, associations, histories as diverse as those of Anglicans, Presbyterians, Wesleyan and other Methodists, Baptists and Congregationalists. What past rending of the Church of Christ these very titles recall! Of course, it may be said that the agreement of a few leaders after close conference with one another does not carry with it the agreement of the mass of their fellow-ministers and people. That is true. Yet it is worth noting that when the report of the Committee was presented to the Conference, and by the Conference to the Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, the Council, in spite of the large issues with which the document dealt, and the large numbers of which the Council was composed, gave it what may be regarded as a general approval, and asked

that the Conference should continue. The Statement, doubtless, is but seed sown in a wide field and a difficult soil; but, if it is good seed, it may, in God's own time, bear full fruit.

Of course, again, it may be said that it leaves many of the most difficult points untouched. I have already admitted, and indeed insisted, that this is true. In a sense it ends just where the most obviously acute and practical difficulties begin. The Committee of the Conference has met again, and is now considering some of them. It may be that further progress at present may prove to be impossible. Indeed, it may be well that time should be allowed to enable what has been agreed to sink into the common mind of the Churches concerned. Believe me, I am the last man to underrate the formidable obstacles that remain, or to indulge in over-sanguine hopes. But there are two questions which I confidently put to you and leave with you. The first is, Does not the Statement, even as it is, disclose a framework of Faith and Order within which it may be possible to build up, or rather restore, in the course, it may be, of generations, a real

and living unity in "a Church genuinely Catholic, loyal to all truth, and gathering into its fellowship all who profess and call themselves Christians, within whose visible unity all the treasures of Faith and Order bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present shall be possessed in common and made serviceable to the whole Body of Christ"?

The second question is more simple, and the answer is surely very plain. Must not God mean men who have been enabled to get thus far together to go further? The way may be long, the difficulties assuredly are great, but men who have once seen the vision of a true Catholic Church will never leave the road. They will say, in loyalty to it, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." They may not reach the Holy City themselves, but even so they will be content if they die with their faces still resolutely set towards it, and leave to their children the unconquered hope that *their* feet may yet stand within its gates. I beg of you, and all who may attend these lectures, in thought and prayer and desire to join their company.

THE FREE CHURCHES AND REUNION

BY DR. W. B. SELBIE

Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford

I HAVE been asked to speak to-day on the attitude of the Free Churches towards reunion, particularly with regard the Report of the Joint Conference which has been holding several sessions at Lambeth since the meetings of the great Lambeth Conference itself. I have been asked not to evade any of the difficulties and to speak with entire frankness, and this I shall try to do to-day. I believe some disappointment has been expressed at the attitude of the Free Churches generally, not only towards the findings of the Lambeth Conference and the Appeal to all Christain people which was then sent out, but also towards the findings of this later Joint Conference. It is felt that we have not shown, or some of the Free Churches have not

shown, that sympathy with the whole movement towards reunion that we might have been expected to do. I think, however, that this is perhaps an exaggerated view of the situation among the Free Churches, and I can best approach the subject to-day by trying to give you some sort of indication of their mind with regard to this whole question before we come to deal with the particular proposals of the Joint Committee.

We should always remember that the Free Churches, or at least the rank and file of the Free Churches, approach this subject at a very different angle from that of the Anglicans, and I think also that we must recognise that the rank and file of the Free Churches look at the question somewhat differently from their leaders. It has been said on both sides that the leaders are far in advance of the rank and file. It is quite certain that there are a number of Anglicans who do not follow the lead of the two Archbishops, and there are many Congregationalists who would not accept some of the positions I have accepted, and would not follow my lead on a question of this kind.

That, however, is not a thing to be deprecated. If all the people in the churches were prepared blindly to accept anything that their leaders said or did, it would not be a thing to congratulate ourselves upon, but most unfortunate. But these differences of point of view make a great campaign of education necessary on both sides, as to the position of the Free Churches in general towards the Lambeth proposals and as to the general objective which those proposals have in view—the objective of the reunion of Christendom.

The Free Churches do not realise, for example, that they are committing the sin of schism. They know that their work has been owned and blessed of God, and that being so, that they have a very definite part to play in the work of the Christian Church in the world, and that they have proved their right to play this part. And they also recognise that, so far as English-speaking Christianity is concerned, they represent the enormous majority of the English-speaking Christians the world over. They are, therefore, not prepared to look at the subject from what they at any rate regard as the rather

narrow Anglican point of view. They, therefore, do not feel the urge of the subject as Anglicans appear to do on the side of order, which seems to them to loom rather large in the mind of Anglicans. But what they do feel is that the disunion of the churches is a shame and a scandal in face of the great evils with which all the churches are confronted at the present time, and in view of the impotence which this produces in the churches themselves. They are not inclined to think so much about past divisions, as about the fact that we cannot close our ranks and are in different regiments that are not fighting side by side, but almost fighting one another. They feel that this hampers the whole work of the Kingdom of God and injures the Christian witness in the world. Therefore, when the Lambeth proposals were first put out they were received among the Free Churches with a great sigh of gratitude and thanksgiving. Men felt that here at last was the note that they had hoped for many years to hear sounded. There had been many expressions of friendly feeling in the past on the part of individual Anglicans. There had also been a good deal

of co-operation in good works ; but it had never before been stated openly that those who belonged to the Free Churches were Christians in the same sense as others ; nor had it ever been urged in anything like an authoritative way that there should be a better mutual knowledge among the various branches of the Christian Church. Ever since Lambeth, Free Churchmen have been looking rather wistfully for some definite movement towards this better understanding.

They have felt constantly that, whilst Lambeth spoke with a very clear voice, there were very few echoes of that voice in the Church at large. You will remember that the Bishops recognised that it might be proper for a Bishop to allow a Free Churchman who was of the right mind in regard to reunion to preach in the pulpit of an Anglican church. In some places this has been done without much comment, but in a great many places a storm has been raised, and I fear that in certain cases with which I myself am personally familiar more harm than good was done ; and one felt that there is not the same desire for this particular form of

co-operation in the Anglican Church generally as there was among the Lambeth Bishops.

Then again Free Churchmen feel that, ever since Lambeth, the emphasis has been too strongly laid on the side of order and organisation. What they want to realise is unity of the spirit rather than unity of organisation first.

They feel—and I am bound to say that I entirely agree with the great body of my fellow Free Churchmen—that the only real unity, the only unity which is worth having, the only unity which is in any way comparable to that which is suggested and recommended in the New Testament, is the unity of faith and spirit, the unity of Christ's people under the leadership of Christ, the unity of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and who find in Him their salvation. They had the impression that this unity existed. Many of them remember the first interim report of that very remarkable Committee on Faith and Order which was issued before the war, a committee consisting of representatives of every section of the Anglican Church and of all sections of Non-conformity. In its first interim report that

Committee set out a definite statement on matters of faith, and it became perfectly clear from the findings of that Committee that on the great fundamentals of the faith there was no real difference between the Free Churches and the Anglican Church. That was a great achievement, and I think it has never received the notice that was its due, because there was the fact set out under the signatures of these men that they were agreed in the things which were most fundamental to the Christian faith. That being so, Free Churchmen have rather wondered why it is that the negotiations which have since taken place have been entirely concerned with matters of order and organisation, and that it seems to be the general opinion now that before we can have anything like reunion we must have something like uniformity of organisation, and that the reunited Church is to be one great uniform organised community. Free Churchmen generally are very suspicious of uniformity; it was the attempt to enforce uniformity which made them, and they are not likely to consent to any further attempt to enforce uniformity even by agreement. Therefore many of them have

looked with some suspicion on the findings of the Joint Conference which has been recently meeting at Lambeth in order to follow up and explore the suggestions of the Lambeth Conference itself. I have been a member of that Joint Conference, and on the whole I agree with these findings; but I want to state now not so much my own opinion, as the opinion of Free Churchmen who have spoken very freely to me on the subject, and who perhaps represent the average of our Churches, because unless we can carry with us the great bulk of these people—the great bulk of the Free Churches on the one hand and the great bulk of average Anglicans on the other, who perhaps have thought very little and are very little concerned about the matter—unless we can carry these, any scheme of reunion will still remain a scheme simply on paper.

In the findings of the Joint Conference, then, there are three great sections:—

I. The Nature of the Church.

II. The Ministry.

III. The Place of the Creed in a United Church.

Of the section on the nature of the Church

I need say very little. It sets out in very clear and unmistakable language the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ, consisting of "all those who have been or are being redeemed by and in Christ, whether in this world or in the world beyond our sight," as a visible institution, and as also possessing "certain visible and recognisable marks," the Sacraments, the ideal of the Christian life, the duly constituted ministry, and so on. The only paragraph in that section which has met with anything like questioning is the paragraph which says: "The marks which ought to characterise the Church visible on earth are possessed by these existing separate Churches and societies of Christian people in very varying degrees of completeness or defect. Hence, even though they be parts of the visible Church, they cannot be considered as all alike giving equally adequate expression to the Lord's Mind and Purpose. Some, indeed, may be so defective that they cannot rightly be judged to be parts of that Church. But such judgments, though made in trust that they are in accordance with the Divine Mind, must be regarded as limited to the sphere of the visible

Church as an ordered society here on earth. It would be presumption to claim that they have a like validity in the sphere of the whole Church as the One Body of the redeemed in Christ, for within that sphere judgment can only be given by the All-knowing Mind and Sovereign Mercy of God" (I. 10).

Now that is a rather involved and somewhat difficult paragraph, but it has been read in our churches, and much consideration has been given to its meaning, and the net result has been taken to be that we are prepared to hand over certain sections of the Free Churches to the uncovenanted mercies of God, as we might say, but that we are not ready to have them in any reunited Church in the future. The feeling has become strong that the paragraph is aimed at the Friends, or Quakers, and the Salvation Army; and there are many who are not prepared to de-christianise or unchurch the Society of Friends; and I am afraid that until that paragraph is made clearer, or until we are able to modify our position in some way in this respect, it will be a great obstacle to a reunion of the churches.

In the section on the Ministry we have the

findings of the Committee in regard to Ordination and the Episcopate. These make it clear that the ministry should be a ministry of the whole Church, and should represent, in the Church, "in the name and by the authority of the Lord Who is the Head of the Church, the powers and functions which are inherent in the Church." And in the ministry "there must be not only an inward call of the Spirit, but also an outward and visible call and commission by the Church.

"It is in accordance with apostolic practice and the ancient custom of the Church that this Commission should be given through ordination, with prayer and the laying-on of hands by those who have authority given to them to ordain.

"We believe that in ordination, together with this commission to minister, divine grace is given through the Holy Spirit in response to prayer and faith for the fulfilment of the charge so committed" (II. 5, 6).

Then there is a long paragraph dealing with various forms of ministry; but the crucial paragraphs come later, and are as follows:—

“In view of the fact that the Episcopate was from early times and for many centuries accepted, and by the greater part of Christendom is still accepted, as the means whereby this authority of the whole body is given, we agree that it ought to be accepted as such for the United Church of the future.

“Similarly, in view of the place which the Council of Presbyters and the Congregation of the faithful had in the constitution of the early Church, and the preservation of these elements of presbyteral and congregational order in large sections of Christendom, we agree that they should be maintained with a representative and constitutional Episcopate as permanent elements in the order and life of the United Church.

“The acceptance of Episcopal Ordination for the future would not imply the acceptance of any particular theory as to its origin or character, or the disowning of past ministries of Word and Sacrament otherwise received, which have, together with those received by Episcopal Ordination, been used and blessed by the Spirit of God” (II. 8, 9, 10).

Now there we have findings which I think are extremely important, and which do represent a very large measure of agreement ; but the criticism passed on our side on these findings is that they are ambiguous. It is suggested here that the United Church of the future shall be episcopal, presbyterian and congregational in organisation. But what plain, simple-minded people want to know is, How is this great amalgamation to be carried out? That difficulty is supposed to be solved by the statement that a representative and constitutional episcopate should be set up. One of the things which Free Churchmen will want to know is, what, in the minds of those who framed these findings, is meant by "representative and constitutional." Is it just the representation that we have in our Churches at the present time, when we appoint representatives of the Church to do certain things in the name of the Church, or does representative mean apostolic succession, or the representation which is derived through and gathered from the general history of the Church through the appointed channels? One

thing which must be made clear is as to the meaning of the word "representative" in this connection.

Then, again, what is meant by the phrase "Episcopal Ordination"? We have in our Free Churches pretty clear ideas as to the ministry. We recognise that no man ought to enter the ministry of the Church of Christ unless he is called thereto by the Spirit of God, and one of the first of the steps we take in connection with a man seeking to enter the ministry is to ascertain, so far as is humanly possible, whether this man is called by the Spirit of God to the work. We put a man through very clear and definite tests: not tests of theological belief alone, but tests of action, and he has to show himself approved of God for this work. And when this is known, so far as it is humanly possible to discover it, then by the act of the Church he is set apart for the work. But the actual act of ordination we regard as a purely human thing; it is man's recognition and ratification of the action of the Spirit of God; and we do not believe that by this human act we can add anything

to the work of the Spirit of God. So far as the man is concerned, we commission him for work in his particular section of the Church ; but that commission is of men : the calling is of God. Now, are we to understand in the future that in the case of men so called and ordained they can be commissioned for work in the United Church by a bishop, acting along with presbyters and the representatives of the congregation ; or are we to understand that the ceremonies which any such man will have to undergo in the reunited Church will be a re-ordination ? In the Lambeth Conference it was urged that we should accept "a commission through episcopal ordination" ; now, if that had been worded, "a commission from the hands of a bishop," I do not think we should have had any sort of objection, but when it is put, "a commission through episcopal ordination," it gives us pause. They say, of course, and I think say quite honestly, that we shall not be asked to repudiate our past ministry, that we shall not be asked in any way to do anything or say anything which will imply that we had not been working under

the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God ; but to us the whole matter of ordination is at once so simple and solemn that we cannot use the word in this double sense, and if the word ordination is used, then it comes to mean doing over again something which has been done once and for all. "Commission," we can understand, but re-ordination we cannot. I do not think that there is the smallest hope of any, save perhaps a mere fraction of Free Churchmen, being willing to except re-ordination in the sense in which I have described it. Many of us feel—I do myself—now that the whole matter is over, that these paragraphs of this report are a little too ambiguous, and that a great deal in them needs explaining before we can get very much further.

Then we come to the very serious question of the place of the Creeds in the United Church ; and the suggestion of the committee is that the Nicene Creed should be accepted as a sufficient statement of the corporate faith of the United Church, the Apostles' Creed to be used as a confession of faith at baptism : "Its use at baptism would imply recognition of the cor-

porate faith of the Church therein expressed as the guide and inspiration of human life."

And then there is the paragraph: "When assent to the Creeds is required by the United Church, such assent should not be understood to imply the acceptance of them as a complete expression of the Christian Faith, or as excluding reasonable liberty of interpretation. It should be understood to imply the acceptance of them as agreeable to the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures, as affirming essential elements in the Christian Faith, and as preserving that Faith in the form in which it has been handed down through many centuries in the history of the Christian Church" (III. 7).

And the section goes on to say that nothing in this hinders the thankful recognition of the continued presence and teaching of the living Spirit in the Body of Christ, and it emphasises "the duty of the Church to keep its mind free and ready to receive from Him in each day and generation ever-renewed guidance in the apprehension and expression of the truth."

Personally, I feel very little difficulty there, but there is serious difficulty felt by many

members of the Free Churches. They realise that these ancient creeds, while they do express and conserve the fundamentals of the Christian faith, do so in a way which it is very difficult for the modern mind intelligently and frankly to accept. We are told that we must interpret these creeds in our own way, but many of us feel that that is not enough. We know the ferment that is going on in the minds of men about Christian doctrine. We realise that the Church and all its concerns are suffering from a supposed lack of frankness. The impression may not be justified, but it is there and it is widespread. The truths in the Creeds we all accept, but we feel very strongly that they must be expressed in ways that the modern man can understand, and in language which the common people can recognise as theirs.

I hope, therefore, that when we come to understand each other better, while we honour those ancient symbols, and use them in our worship, we shall not make them a test of membership in the reunited Church. They are not proposed as a test, but it comes practically to that. If I may refer for a moment to

my own denomination, I would say that the old Congregational principle is a very sound and very healthy one. We have always regarded the Creeds as excellent declarations of the faith, but we have always insisted that they must not be made an imposition on tender consciences. Declarations of the faith we must have. The Church must be able to point to certain documents saying: "There is our faith," and the Nicene Creed is, perhaps, as good as any other for the moment, but it will not do to make them impositions on any. The day is gone for that; and if ever we come to frame a constitution for the reunited Church, we shall, I hope, take a broader line than seems to be indicated in these statements which I have been reading.

Another thing troubling the minds of Free Churchmen is as to whether the future Church is to be really Protestant or is to be Catholic. Now here I am treading on very delicate ground. But we as outsiders cannot help seeing a great deal of what is going on in the Anglican Church at present. We realise the tremendous struggle that is going on between Anglo-Catholicism, on the one hand, and

Protestant Anglicanism, whether of the Evangelical or the liberal type, on the other, and we are wondering very much which party is going to win, because that is going to make an immense difference to our attitude to any future reunion. If the Anglo-Catholic view of Church tradition and of orders and of episcopacy is to prevail, it is quite unthinkable that either we, or indeed the liberals and evangelicals within the Church, will ever be able to come to anything like an agreement. There will have to be a definite understanding, and I am bound to say that so far matters of that kind have been avoided and slurred over; and before we can get very much further there must be frank understanding on questions of that sort.

Then as to the relation of the Church to the State. If the reunited Church is to take the form that seems to be expected by many at the present time, it will be such an extraordinarily big, strong, conglomerate body, that it is almost unthinkable that such a body should be in the same relation to the State as that held by the Anglican Church to-day, a relation which has grown up historically and which no one would think of setting up *de novo*. That

question again has been systematically put on one side, but I am afraid that some definite understanding will be necessary before we can go very much further.

There is in the minds of many people just now a feeling that we have come to the end of what we can do for the present. But I do want, in conclusion, to urge one or two considerations which would make for the continuance at any rate of conference. We on our side do not wish to close any doors. We want the matter to remain open as long as possible, to see whether we cannot draw nearer and frame some basis of reunion ; but at the same time we feel strongly that the best way of doing this is to get to know one another better ; and in order to do that we hope it will be possible to have joint meetings ; that it may be possible to meet in one another's churches, and to sit at the feet of the leaders, not of our own Churches, but of the other Churches, so that we may get at the minds of the members of the other Churches. I am certain that because of our recent meetings men who were very sharply divided have obtained a common mutual understanding that

would have been quite impossible apart from the experience which those conferences have involved. I can see how much easier the whole situation became as time went on. We met at first on opposite sides of a table, and there was a feeling of antagonism. But that passed away, and so feelings of estrangement will disappear if we can only get to know each other better ; and the more we can get together the easier will it be to bring together the bodies which we represent. We need closer mutual understanding. There is on our side a grievous ignorance about the Anglican Church. There is an even worse ignorance of us on the Anglican side ; and as long as that condition of mutual ignorance remains, reunion will always be a dream. I hope, therefore, that everything will be done to continue conference, so that we may get to know each other better and look forward to the time when we shall recognise that we are one in the faith of Christ Jesus, and that we therefore ought to be able to build up a reunited Church that will claim and deserve the devoted adherence of those who are at the present moment divided from one another.

NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES

BY DR. J. SCOTT LIDGETT

Warden of the Bermondsey Settlement

HAVING read the report of the Archbishop of York's address, the first in this series, I can bear witness to the accuracy of his account of the facts, and I do not find myself in any difference as to either his argument or his conclusions. I have not yet had an opportunity of reading Dr. Selbie's address, and therefore I cannot comment on it, either by way of expressing my agreement, which is unnecessary, or any divergence of view, which I think could hardly be serious. I want to carry the discussion this morning to the point of those principles which I think should be borne in mind by us as we attempt to advance the cause of reunion. For reunion cannot be treated as a mere practical expedient. It is quite possible to show what immense advan-

tages would come to the world, to the Church, and to the Kingdom of Christ on earth by the complete union of all Christian people. That, however, is quite insufficient where something that reaches right down to the roots of spiritual life is concerned. Reunion cannot be an artificial juncture ; it must give expression to a profound spiritual fact. It must have a spiritual basis, and as it must have a spiritual basis, so it must have an intellectual ideal. If practical considerations are insufficient, sentimental desires and affections are equally inadequate to bear the weight of a reconstruction of the Christian Church. Now I would urge that where we have to seek a common intellectual ideal as expressing a common spiritual basis, we must remember that the theory of life must be based upon the observation of life. In all concerns where life is involved, a theory which is brought to the facts and imposed upon the facts must of necessity be artificial and inadequate. The theory, whatever it may be, eventually must be suggested and supplied by the facts, so that it may be carefully drawn out from them and may be seen to find room for

them all and to explain them all when it has been completed. Now, if that is the case with all forms of life, I submit that it is true of spiritual life and of what I believe to be the highest expression of spiritual life, the Christian religion. If it be true of the spiritual life, of which the Christian religion is the highest embodiment, then I contend further that it must be true of our theory of the Christian Church. For the Church is not a mere accident of the Christian life ; it is of its substance. It is not merely an instrument of the Christian life ; it is an indispensable expression of that life, a vital organ of it. Therefore, at the outset I would express my full agreement with one of the propositions laid down by the Archbishop of York, that reunion can only be practicable upon the confession by all those who seek it that the Church is not a human organisation, but a divinely-created organ of our Lord's own life in His people.

Now, if we are to seek any explanation of the essence—if I may use that term—of the Christian Church, I think the most authoritative statement of it is to be found in the Epistle

to the Ephesians. It gives the ideal of the Christian Church as it had come to manifestation in the visible organised Church. I claim that position for the Epistle to the Ephesians in regard to our subject, because I hold very strongly that it is a genuinely Pauline document. I think that perhaps it was the latest or almost the latest of St. Paul's important writings. It has been established to be a circular letter sent to a group of churches, and not to any one, and therefore it deals in general conceptions, as apart from handling merely local situations. If that account of the Epistle is true, then it comes to us charged with apostolic authority ; it has behind it the apostle's widest experience in its latest and ripest form. In writing he had before him the facts of his long experience as a planter of Christian communities over the whole range of his missionary activity ; and, in addition to this, as we firmly believe, he was guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Coming then to the ideal of the Epistle to the Ephesians as it stands before us, I find five great positions laid down by the apostle. In the first place

the Church springs out of a supreme spiritual relationship. It is held together by a common mystic experience. The Church, as St. Paul describes it, is the Body of Christ. It is pervaded by the life of Christ ; it is directed by and responsive to the Headship of Christ ; it gives expression and fulfilment to the mind of Christ. It is the organ by which the ascended and glorified Christ makes manifest His sovereignty over the world and shapes the history of the world to the fulfilment of His redemptive purpose. In short, the Church is constituted by Christ ; it lives in Christ ; it is consecrated to Christ ; it is the visible organ of Christ in the world. If that be the first position which the Epistle lays down, then it is clear that the Unity of the Church is vital and organic. It is the indispensable concomitant or property of the common relationship to Christ, of the common faith and the common experience which are shared by every member of the whole body. Now it is significant that the apostle introduces a new figure, and I cannot help thinking that that is very important and that it carries with it the warning that

in all discussions of these topics we should not let ourselves be ridden too hard by any one figure, however important it may be. St. Paul in his teaching, by the very versatility of his mind, passes from one figure to another, and if we are to gain a complete view of his doctrine we must give equal weight to the succession of figures by means of which he presents it to us. And so the apostle, having opened with the doctrine that the Church is the Body of Christ, goes on in the Epistle to represent it as a commonwealth. He says to his Gentile readers that they have now become "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." I want you specially to bear that in mind, because it suggests to me at least that the unity of the Church must be conceived as the unity of a commonwealth, and not predominantly as the unity, still less as the continuous identity or the unchanged identity of a constitution.

My third point is that the Epistle represents the unity of the Church as becoming gradually visible and progressively complete. He says at the end of the second chapter that in Christ

“each several building fitly framed together groweth into a holy sanctuary in the Lord.” There is a slight difference of opinion as to that rendering, but I cannot help thinking that what he means is established for us by what obviously must have been the facts to which he was calling attention. He himself had been a builder, founding under Christ local churches in every place in which he preached the Gospel. Obscure communities here and there presented, as I think, to his mind the picture of a building which, while it has a corner-stone, an architect’s plan, and a company of builders, is yet so incomplete that the stranger who comes to the scene of the building operations might be in doubt as to what is the architect’s design and what is the goal of the building. But the apostle bids us stand as spectators and see every several building growing, until at last it is seen in its complete unity as a sanctuary, every part of which is filled, pervaded, by the immediate presence of God. Let it not be supposed for one single moment that St. Paul was contemplating what has since happened, the division of the Church into rival and some-

times contending denominations. That is a complexity of the situation which unhappily has arisen in later times. But yet I think the point of my conclusion is unaffected by that. The unity of the Church, according to the doctrine of St. Paul, is something which has to grow towards a complete fulfilment and manifestation to the world. But that is not all. I advance to the fourth point. St. Paul treats the perfect realisation and manifestation of unity as the goal and sign of spiritual maturity. If you pass on to the fourth chapter, the various figures to which I have drawn your attention are thrown into the background, and while he uses them he passes beyond them to explain them ; he speaks of the building up of the Body of Christ : "Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." I take it that this means that unity can only be fulfilled as we come to the more intimate knowledge of Christ, and that all such more intimate knowledge of Christ must of necessity—spiritual relationships with Him

being what they are—tend to the complete organisation of unity on the earth. Now, fifthly, the Church which depends upon a supreme spiritual relationship, which is united as a commonwealth, and grows towards the perfecting of that unity in spiritual maturity, must needs have a ministry. We are told that “He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministering unto the building up of the Body of Christ.” The Church as a living organisation must needs have a ministry. That ministry must be diversified, partly because of the human limitations of ministers and partly because of the varied necessities of the Body of Christ. Therefore, the apostle gives here, as elsewhere, an account of a very richly diversified ministry which was actually to be found in the service of the Church. It is clear that if a diversified ministry is required for the well-being and progress of the Church, that ministry must be universally recognised; otherwise its ministry fails. I go further, and say that that

ministry, universally recognised, must be one ; because the Church being one Body of Christ, its well-being, its growth, its unity can only be served by unity of ministry universally recognised throughout the whole.

Those are the five points which, as it seems to me, stand out for our guidance in this great Epistle of the Church ; and I draw at once two consequences from them. In the first place, the unity of all those who are knit together by a spiritual relationship with Christ is a real fact of the spiritual order which man neither makes nor can destroy. Its fulfilment may be imperfect, its expression may be mutilated and broken ; it is, however, that ideal fact which is the truly real which we all have to recognise and upon which we ought so to build as to give adequate expression to what really is. But I draw another conclusion ; and this is perhaps more controversial. The commonwealth is one and unchanged ; its organisation is flexible. We are all one English people, but in the course of history England has seen great changes in its constitution, and undoubtedly will see a great many more. It is

true that those changes may perhaps be treated as a normal development without the intrusion of any foreign elements ; I will not debate it ; it is rather unlikely, considering how piecemeal English people generally do things, how little they are governed by system and logic, and how much they are actuated by practical needs and common-sense. But whichever way it may be, the people, the commonwealth, is one throughout its history, and we expect it will be to the end. Its constitution changes. Now I ask what right have we to suppose that one human institution, however divine it may be in its origin and life and purposes, should be excepted from that law which prevails everywhere else in the organisation of life—that its constitution, its machinery, its instruments may change, not merely without destroying the identity of its life, but for the sake of the fuller preservation of that identity in a world of change and strife? While that, I think, is fair argument, the facts of history, I believe, reveal that it has actually been the case. No one who is acquainted with the history of Christ's Church through the centuries can fail

to see that the ministries which have established themselves here and there are the result of a continuous development which, while it gave expression to certain essential principles, was at least in part moulded by the changing conditions of spiritual life within the Church and the changing exigencies of the relationship of the Church to the outside world. And so we find a growth in which episcopacy was developed, developed to the patriarchate, developed to the papacy; we find the Presbyterate developed, and so on. I ask you, Is it likely that at any one point the growth of the constitution of the Church was arrested and made final in its form? Must not the constitution and order and organisation of the Church, if it is to live under changing circumstances—for we are still in the infancy of its life—must it not be as flexible, subject to certain governing principles, as is the case with every other constitution which preserves and manifests and promotes the unity of a commonwealth? At the same time those forms of ministry which can be shown to be apostolic and primitive, those forms of ministry which

have grown up, under Providence, to maintain the well-being of the Church and to carry on its work, have, as I understand the subject, thereby established their claim, not merely as useful, but as divinely sanctioned, and I will even say ordained. Therefore any reunion of the Church of Christ must frankly take over and perpetuate the forms of ministry which in germ are primitive and apostolic, which the living growth of the body has developed, which still can be shown to be essential to its highest spiritual efficiency and to the success of its work. Hence, I include among the living forms of ministry which must be recognised in their place and proportion in the reunited Church the Episcopacy, the Presbyterate, and so on. I will not attempt to deal with all.

I hold that this ideal of the Ephesian Epistle gives expression to a vital necessity of the spiritual life. The apostle enumerates a great many unities ; one body, one spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Now I say with the profoundest conviction that none of us can have complete experience and make full

response to all those unities in the perfect way God would have us do while we are broken into sections and do not share our common experience in one great fellowship of one body. Equally do the practical necessities of world-evangelisation of maintaining in Christendom a Christian order of things—alike international, national and social—and of upholding Christian standards of life demand for their complete achievement the complete reunion of Christ's Church.

As to the first, why should the peoples of India, China and Africa be expected, either now or eventually, to face and fight their way through the tangled history of Western Christendom, meeting issues that are largely alien from them and outworn for us? Why should their Catholic fellowship be destroyed at the start because their Churches are founded upon our lack of such fellowship?

Again, the highest hopes are set upon the success of the League of Nations, and the Churches have rightly welcomed this new ideal and sought to bring it within the range of practical politics. Yet how shall the Church

successfully exhort the nations to compose their differences while it tolerates its own? How shall the Church summon the nations to the great venture of transcending the organised traditions of the past and creating a new order, while it is too supine or too cowardly to attempt any such enterprise for itself, although the very law of its being and the spring of its history point towards the need and the success of such an effort?

Finally, how shall the Churches secure the acceptance of Christian standards of life, whether moral or social, while they are too much divided to combine first to seek the full meaning of these standards and then to enforce them?

Hence the promotion of reunion is essential. How is it to be secured? I think, if I have rightly read the general meaning of the Epistle to the Ephesians, one can say in the following way: First, by way of recognition that spiritual life, the corporate spiritual life is supreme, and that order, while important, is subservient to the common spiritual life. In the next place, reunion can only be promoted by the mutual recognition of the communities in which spiritual life has been manifested and fostered.

It is not enough to recognise the individual members of these communities as being Christians, while ignoring, or even excluding, the communions to which they belong. The attempt to make this distinction involves an abstract and unreal separation between such individuals and the societies by which their Christian life has been moulded and in which it has been expressed.

Without these Societies the Christian life, which is recognised, could not, for the most part, have come into existence. Certainly it could not have become what it is. The individuals and the communities are inseparably one.

This does not imply any statement or any judgment as to the degree of perfection to which these communities have attained; it does recognise that they have been used by the Spirit of Christ to guard and foster and express the spiritual life of their members. Therefore they must all be brought together as imperfect sections of the greater whole which Christ would have realised upon earth. Then, thirdly, the United Church must be specifically Christian. It must make the confession of Christ, truly divine, perfectly human, the supreme test of

membership. Here I come to the question of the Creed. A commonwealth must have a common expression ; it must have a common intellectual expression ; otherwise, what is it ? It cannot be a Church. Any such expression of common faith must be coloured by the thought forms of the age in which it is drawn up, whether it be in the fourth century or in the twentieth. No one can draw up an intelligible Confession of Faith who does not use for the purpose the current conceptions. But, believing that the Church of Christ is continuously indwelt by His Spirit and guided at the crises of its life, what can be more suitable than that, with all recognition of freedom and with frank acknowledgment that thought forms have changed during the last fourteen centuries, we should take the great symbol which served the Christian Church of the fourth century and has served it ever since in regard to the indispensable article of our faith, the Headship of Christ, His place in the life of the ineffable Godhead, and His relation to the universe of which He is source and life and end ? I refer to the Nicene Creed.

Furthermore, reunion must seek a common order and common ministry, and, as I have

suggested, that ministry must be universally recognised ; otherwise it would fail to function for the whole body. But that ministry must be so fashioned and moulded by the plastic spirit that lives in the Church as growingly to correspond to the nature of the Church itself and to the needs of life in the ages as they pass. In our situation and circumstances it must bring into the common stock, and therefore preserve, the vital traditions of East and West, British and non-British ; for we must not be parochial. The great traditions of all the Churches represent contributions that have been bestowed and called forth by the Spirit of God, notwithstanding the naughtiness and imperfections of men, to enable a fuller interpretation of the Gospel to be given to mankind, and a larger experience of the Gospel to be received.

Remembering the imperfection and limitation and the growing freedom of the human spirit, it must, under the common order and with the common confession, provide freedom and scope, in order to satisfy the diversities of what, after all, must always be the imperfect apprehension and interpretation of the truth of God.

Lastly, reunion must be so constituted as not

to crystallise the past but to set forth the belief that you best preserve the truth by going on still more fully to discover it. It must find plenty of room not merely for the priest, but for the prophet. Now it is for all these reasons some of us welcome as divinely guided and given the Appeal of the Lambeth Conference. We heartily welcome it because it seems to respond in a fuller measure than anything that has gone before to these spiritual conditions of reunion, and therefore we are anxious carefully to explore it, patiently to pursue the path that it opens up. We will not be peremptory ; we will not be self-willed, if God so please ; we will seek to put ourselves in line with that working of the Spirit which we believe was then manifest, so that difficulties may not be shirked, but may not daunt us, and that gradually, if so it be, we may be ready to cultivate more fully the spirit of union ; and if the spirit of unity prevails, then assuredly even the insuperable difficulties, as they may seem to fearful souls, will be steadily overcome, and if not we, then those who come after us, will enter into the enjoyment, the fruition of this great and God-given vision.

CATHOLICITY AND PRESBYTERY¹

BY DR. P. CARNEGIE SIMPSON

Professor of Church History in Westminster College, Cambridge

IT is a pleasure and a privilege to be here to-day ; and my first word must be an expression of cordial thanks to my friend, your Dean, for his kind invitation which, with the consent of the Bishop of the diocese, makes my coming possible. I am sure, too, that for many—both Anglicans and Free Churchmen—I may express appreciation of this act of ecclesiastical amity. It is all to the good that we get to know one another better. It is said that distance lends enchantment to the view ; but to the view which churches have of one another it lends rather distortion.

Will you—and, in particular, will the Dean—pardon me if the next thing I say is that I am a little sorry about my topic ? This is

¹ An address given in Bristol Cathedral on Sunday, December 10, 1922.

the first time—and it may be the only time—that I, a Presbyterian minister, have the opportunity of speaking in an English cathedral to a congregation mainly, I presume, Anglican. I wish I could have used it to speak to you, not about ecclesiastical politics, but about something nearer the heart of our faith and life. The Archbishop of York—with whom it has been a pleasure to me to work in recent Lambeth conferences on unity—said, in his sermon at the opening of this year's Church Congress at Sheffield, "Can we describe the central experience of Christianity in a single phrase?" And he replied, "Is it not union with a living Christ?" I wish I could have opened my lips here to speak of our common experience as Christians, united to the one Lord and Saviour, rather than—as I have been asked to do—our different opinions as Episcopalians or Presbyterians. And I believe that the cause of unity would gain in spiritual reality and in religious meaning, if, at least sometimes, we heard from one another not about our churches and their constitutions, but about our Lord and what He has been to us and done for us. To-day, however, I must

speak on the subject appointed to me ; but I beg you to remember and to realise this Christian oneness beneath our ecclesiastical differences and to recall it during this address—especially when I say anything with which, as Episcopalians, you stoutly disagree !

I am asked to speak on “Catholicity and Presbytery.” The former topic I have time hardly to do more than name ; but the essential thing can be said almost in a word or two.

What—to go at once to the root—is the creative idea or constitutive principle of the Church of Christ ? It is more than merely the social nature of man—that human life, religiously as well as in other ways, is corporate. It is more than the institution of apostles or even of the Lord Himself. The Church is thus social and has thus been instituted ; but the idea of that which St. Paul calls “the Body of Christ ” is more than either a society or an institution. We must seek a deeper principle. We find it in this very union with the living Christ to which (quoting the Archbishop of York) I have just referred. Christ is not a mere individual man—even the greatest, even the Divine Man. His is a

pervasive and inclusive Personality; and He lives in every one who is a Christian. This is an axiom of our personal Christian life. But it is also the constitutive principle of the Church's life. For Christ Who thus lives in me lives, too, in all my fellow-Christians. My union with Christ, then, carries with it a union with all who are Christ's. The very act which unites me to Him unites me also to them. Thus, as St. Paul puts it, "you are one man in Christ Jesus." This "one man"—it may be better rendered "one humanity"—is the Church; and the creative principle of its being is this union with the living and universal person of Christ. When we see this, we see that the Church is not merely something which we describe—perhaps deprecatingly—as "ecclesiastical," but is essentially something Christian. The Church is a part of the fact of Christ. This is the basis of any true and religious "high" doctrine; for a doctrine of the Church—or of anything about the Church—is "high" just in so far as Jesus Christ is in it.

Now as to catholicity. The word—which is one of the most misused in the religious vocabulary—must, like every other word and

everything in our religion, be constantly carried back to Christ and tested by Him. Its truest use is its first use, when Ignatius, in the earliest extant passage employing the term, said, "Where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." The developments and even the divisions of ecclesiastical history have not made that saying obsolete. The catholic fact about the Church still is Christ in it. This is still the religious meaning of catholicity. It is not, primarily, a thing of ecclesiastical order—it is a thing of Christ living in His people. The aim of catholic order—a most important and legitimate aim in its secondary place—is to give regulated and formed and "ordered" expression to this catholic life. But catholicity is just another name for the largeness and comprehensiveness of the Personality of Jesus Christ dwelling in all who are His. Remember then, if you are going to use this word—this beautiful word—you must use it only in a spirit which is *consistent* with the spirit of Christ and on a scale which is *commensurate* with Him. Christ is the measure of "the Catholic Ideal."

Can this Christian catholicity, let us now ask, be claimed by or confined to any single

church or any single order? We know one answer to this question—I mean the Roman. Is that adequate to the facts? I shall reply by again quoting from one of your episcopal bench. The Bishop of Winchester—honoured by many of us and certainly by me, as much as by any of you—has told us (in an article which appeared two or three years ago in the *Contemporary Review*) how he answered a friend who was thinking of leaving the Church of England for that of Rome. “They will tell you,” he said, “that theirs is the one true Church. It is not true. I ask you to look round on Christian life throughout the world and ask yourself whether it is true. The truth is that the Church of God is a broken Church.” That was the Bishop’s answer. You must permit me to use it too, and to carry it a little further. If an Anglican says this when confronted with the position that only within the Roman obedience is the one Catholic Church, I, a Presbyterian, may say it not less reasonably and convincingly when confronted with the position that only within the episcopalian order is the one Catholic Church. I, too, say “it is not true.” I, too, ask you

“to look round on Christian life throughout the world and ask yourselves whether it is true.” You must not be surprised, therefore, if the thesis that the Catholic Church is *episcopalian* seems to us only a little less inadequate to the facts than the thesis that it is *Roman*. Here with a new meaning we say, *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*. And the candid and Christian mind of the Bishop of Winchester (in the article from which I quoted) feels he must acknowledge this. “The work of the Spirit,” he says, “in the other communions is the evident sign that they are within the great fellowship.” Do not, I would add, class that with God’s Spirit working in, say, any humanitarian movement. What is seen here is the work of the Spirit doing the specific work of the Church—converting sinners and building saints. *That* work is in many communions, and is “the evident sign that they are within the great fellowship.”

Here I find a bridge to my second topic. If the great fellowship comprises various communions—with, certainly, varying degrees of defect—surely we should be willing to learn of one another. I am sure we Presbyterians

have much to learn from you Anglicans. I have been asked to say a little to-day about Presbytery. I shall do it uncontroversially and, it must be, concisely.

In England the Presbyterian Church is a very small body, just as the Episcopalian is in Scotland—in both cases for historical reasons into which I cannot here enter. Throughout Christendom, the Presbyterian Church is reckoned by a recent and careful writer to comprise one hundred million adherents. I think some people in England regard it as a peculiarly Scottish thing. On the contrary, it is far less confined to what Lord Hugh Cecil spoke of recently as “insular nationalism” than any other reformed church, and is international to a degree second only to Rome. Presbytery is the church polity adopted by certain churches which, first, accepted the Reformation, and, secondly, were at that time not hampered by the civil power in their ordering of the Church according to what they believed to be most consistent with the New Testament. Presbyterians do not claim that their system is of “divine right” in the sense of being prescribed by Christ. “No form of Church government,”

says the Regius Professor of Divinity in Oxford—now Bishop-designate of Gloucester—“can find any support, direct or indirect, in the teaching of our Lord.” We agree; and all we claim for Presbyterian order is that it is “founded on and agreeable to the Word of God.”

In its first and most characteristic feature it is this indisputably. Presbytery is *conciliar*—that is, government by a consultative body—and not the individual rule of one man, whether the rector over a parish or the bishop over a diocese or the Pope over the whole Church. This is unquestionably primitive. There is no case of an apostolic letter being addressed to “the bishop” (in the singular); it is always to “the bishops” or “elders” or “presbyters”—to, that is, a conciliar authority. If St. Paul had sent a letter to the Church in Bristol, he most certainly would have addressed it to the presbytery! I make two remarks on this point. One is that churches which have recovered and enjoy conciliar government, which is in harmony with the conception of free institutions, cannot be expected to go back to one-man rule, which, moreover, seems

to us hardly in keeping with Christ's warning against lordship in His Church. But the other is that I see no insurmountable difficulty in combining this conciliar polity with the presence of an episcopal president. John Knox and his coadjutors described as "the best reformed church" that which has "the Superintendent with his council." It is interesting that the latest Lambeth Report on unity proposes this kind of combination; but I cannot discuss it further now.

If the conciliar be the element where we differ from one-man episcopacy, the point where we differ from, on the other hand, Congregationalism is that our polity is also *hierarchical*. It appears to us that Congregationalism fails to provide adequate constitutional means by which the larger *ecclesia*, which is more than a local congregation, may responsibly consult and effectively act. Our hierarchy of courts—it is, in consistency with the conciliar idea, of courts and not of individuals—provides for this completely. There is the Session for the congregation; the Presbytery for what may correspond with a diocese; the Synod for a province; the General Assembly

for a national area. I should add that our standards recognise, beyond the national General Assembly, the Œcumenical Council of Christendom; and though, amid the present divisions of the visible Church, this recognition is not operative, it shows that presbytery has a horizon wider than a national church (which is a dubiously Christian conception at the best) and that it cherishes the idea of catholicity in its polity. This hierarchy of courts is a great guarantee of justice. Anything done in a lower court may be appealed to the higher; and this means it must be done, not in prejudice and passion, but on some ground capable of reasoned statement before the court of appeal. Presbytery has other faults; but I do think, so far as my observation goes, that it has the justest ecclesiastical system which exists.

These two characteristics of Presbyterian order—the conciliar and the hierarchical—are practically, as I have indicated, its main differences from, respectively, the Episcopalian and the Congregationalist types of Church polity. I now ask you to note that this system of a conciliar hierarchy is not exclusively clerical, but that, in all our courts, *representatives of*

the people sit with the ministers and exercise equal rights in government. The special functions and rights of the ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament are recognised and, in that sphere, unquestioned ; but in government, there are associated with the ministers what we call “elders”—*seniores plebis*—who are chosen by and represent the body of the Christian people. This is in accord with what we read in the *Book of Acts* where the whole Church acts with the Apostles, and it is involved in the very idea of the Church being self-governed. This system of ministers and lay-representatives thus sitting and acting together works with entire success. It greatly increases efficiency. It keeps our whole procedure in touch with the people. It develops responsibility ; and it is responsibility which makes men—Church-men as well as any other kind. And a further result is that, with really very few exceptions, the relations between ministers and elders are of the happiest kind ; and, for my part, I have hardly ever seen anything in our Presbyterian Church life of that veiled jealousy, each of the other’s position, which in some quarters is latent and is occa-

sionally patent between cleric and layman. I may add that, in some churches, this system of representatives of the people may now include women.

These church courts, I now pass on to say, discharge all the functions of government—legislative, administrative, judicial. They enact the Church's laws, carry on its business, administer its discipline. Now, such complete exercise of the functions of government must carry with it, if it is to be effectual, a great principle—that of the *spiritual freedom* of the Church. This means that the Church must be free from all civil interference in the direction of its spiritual affairs. It is important that this principle be correctly stated. Note two points. First, it is a claim to *spiritual* freedom only. It is not, as we hold it, what is called "Hildebrandism," which claims that the Church is exempt from civil jurisdiction in respect even of temporal affairs. On the contrary, we are High State-men as well as High Church-men, and say that, in temporal affairs—in questions, for example, concerning property—the State is the right and the divinely ordained arbiter. But in all matters essentially spiritual—the

frontiers, I admit, are in places debateable—the Church recognises no civil control, but must be free to obey only what it believes to be the Word of God and the will of its one Head, Who is Christ. But note a second and very important thing. This freedom is claimed for the *Church*. It is not just clerical freedom. This high-churchism is not high-clericalism. It is one thing and a good thing for the Church to have liberty: it is another thing and a bad thing for the clergy to think they can take liberties! This principle of liberty, truly conceived—spiritual liberty, and liberty for the Church—is a thing we shall never compromise. It is pre-eminently the Scottish Church—Presbyterian, of course—which has been the protagonist of this principle, and has been that even in recent years. I belonged to a branch of the Scottish Church which twice over in one generation sacrificed or risked every penny it possessed rather than compromise its spiritual freedom. But into this story—which I commend to supporters of what is called “life and liberty” in the Anglican Church—I cannot here enter.

My time does not permit me to say more about

Presbyterian polity than these four things I have mentioned—that it is conciliar, hierarchical, representative of the Church and not merely of the clergy, and has freedom. I shall bring this necessarily imperfect address to a close by saying two or three words on ordination to the ministry, and then ending on another theme.

Ordination in the Presbyterian Church is carried out in the New Testament way described as “the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” We Presbyterians gladly recognise that the Anglican Church preserves something of this in the fact that, at your ordinations, presbyters lay on hands along with the bishop ; and we like to think of you as at least semi-presbyterian on ordination days ! But the important thing in ordination to the Holy Ministry goes far deeper than any question of method or the meticulous ritual insistence on anyone’s hands, whether presbyter’s or bishop’s. The great—the “high”—thought about the ministry is that Christ gives it to His Church. The great—and, I repeat, the “high”—idea is not merely succession : it is Christ Himself dwelling in His Church and acting therein through His chosen ministers.

Now, whenever you thus look at the ministry, then the really important thing in ordination is that the man the bishop or the presbytery ordain is one truly vocated of Christ to be His minister. I ask you to observe how the Presbyterian Church—and not it alone—seeks to verify this. We do not, in ordinary cases, ordain a man simply when his education and character are duly attested, or even when he himself declares he thinks he is called. We want this personal persuasion corroborated. And we find it corroborated—not, of course, infallibly, but really and impressively—when a congregation of Christian people come to the presbytery and put their signatures to it that, after deliberation and prayer, they find this man has a message of God to them, and they desire that he be appointed to the cure of their souls. Thus we ordain—except in cases of foreign missionaries and others—only after a “call” from a congregation. This “call,” I may add—which is indubitably primitive and should not have been lost in any church—makes a peculiarly tender tie between minister and people, which, I think, those who have been appointed to churches otherwise must

envy. The only other thing I say at present about our ordination is that we never think of it as just "ours." I mean we never think of it as merely "Presbyterian." In our ordinal, I was ordained to be, not a Presbyterian minister, but "a minister of the Church of God," and to minister "the Word and Sacraments," which are catholic or are nothing. I wish people who press upon us "re-ordination" and who talk in a way which I think is meaningless about the sacraments in our Church as "valid for us," would appreciate this. But I will not argue it here, and I desire to close on a different theme.

Let me close by speaking—quietly and reverently—of the celebration of the Holy Communion in the Presbyterian Church. It is often said that we Presbyterians unduly exalt preaching; the very arrangement of many of our older churches, with a great pulpit as the central object, seems to show that. Well, remember that to "preach the Gospel" is the first thing in the Great Commission which the Lord left as the marching orders for His Church; while, as to the great pulpit (which is not universal by any means), at least appreciate

its significance, which is not at all to magnify the eminence of the man who preaches but is to represent the throne of the Word of God. To exalt the Word is a worthy thing in the Church; and it need not for a moment imply any low or unworthy view of the Sacraments. On the contrary, the supreme and the most sacred thing about the Sacrament of the Holy Communion—I have time to mention it only—is brought out in no other ritual as it is in the absolutely simple service of the Presbyterian rite. There is no imposed liturgy—though a liturgy is entirely permissible and is not unfamiliar within the Presbyterian Church—but three essential things are invariable. There are, first, the Words of Institution. These are said, not in a prayer or recital to God, but to the communicants, for the single and the final reason that Christ, the Institutor, said them, not to the Father, but to the disciples; and the Lord's own service should surely be conducted, in such a matter, in the Lord's own way. There is, secondly, the prayer before Communion, commonly called the Eucharistic Prayer. This includes the Invocation of the Holy Spirit to bless and sanctify the ordinance

and use it for its sacred end, making it a true sacrament to those who receive it in faith—what, in the Eastern liturgies (for it is omitted in Western) is known as the *Epiklesis*. The third essential and invariable feature of the Presbyterian rite is of special significance. At the actual giving of the Bread and Wine, the minister, standing behind the Table and facing the people (as is indubitably the primitive position) says only the Lord's very words—"This is My Body broken for you," "This is My Blood." Note, I pray you, the first personal pronoun. Note its significance. It is Christ Himself Who presides at this solemn moment, through His unworthy minister. It is not the celebrant or even the Church that speaks to the communicant: it is the Lord. This is surely the supreme thought—nay, more than a thought, the supreme Reality—in this wonderful ordinance. It is not only that Christ instituted the Sacrament. It is, far more, that He Himself is "really" present in the Sacrament—do not say in the elements, which are but a part of it, but say in the whole Sacrament—giving Himself to the believing soul as verily as, at the First Supper in the upper room,

He put the Bread and Wine into the hands of the disciples. This is, I say, the supreme thing in the Holy Communion; and I know no ritual where more simply, yet more directly and explicitly, it is expressed than when, in the hushed congregation, these words, and these words only, are heard—"This is *My* Body," "*My* Blood." To that—perceived by faith, received by love—nothing can be added. I trust you do not misunderstand my purpose in thus telling you of these sacred things. They are almost too sacred for description. But you, who are Anglicans, and have and love your own beautiful service of Holy Communion, should know these features of the simpler Presbyterian rite, just as I, a Presbyterian, should know—and do know with profound appreciation—the order in the Prayer-book "for the Administration of the Lord's Supper," the great structure of the Roman Mass, and the glowing Divine Liturgies of the Eastern Church. When will the doors to the Communion-Table in our various churches so stand open that there shall be a truly catholic eucharist at that Table, which, let us remember, is not ours—not Anglicans' nor Romans' nor

Easterns' nor Presbyterians' nor any others'—but is the Lord's Table, Who is the Lord of all of us, to which *He* invites, where *He* presides, and at which *He* meets the whole family of His faithful and loving Church and Himself gives to them the Bread of Life?

I again thank the Dean for his kindness in asking me here, and I thank you for listening to this imperfect address, which I have thought would be most usefully confined mainly to what is informative, rather than that I should, at this stage, attempt what is constructive. I trust that, in what has been said, I have not misinterpreted nor misused your kindness. My last word shall be to invoke upon you and upon the great Church to which you belong the blessing of God, and I do it in words which (in a metrical version) close every meeting of a Presbyterian General Assembly :

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem : they shall prosper
that love thee !

Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy
palaces ;

For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now
say, Peace be within thee ;

Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek
thy good.”

A REPLY TO CRITICISM

BY DR. A. C. HEADLAM

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You have listened to an admirable exposition of the Joint Report of the Lambeth Conference on Reunion, which forms the basis of our investigation, from the Archbishop of York. You have heard an eloquent defence of the principles which are involved in it from Dr. Scott Lidgett. I do not think there is anything I can add to either of these. There is little I should disagree with, and I think that it is an admirable omen for the future that I should find myself in agreement both with the Anglican Archbishop and the eloquent Methodist preacher. Then, thirdly, you have had a criticism of this report by Dr. Selbie—a very valuable criticism, in which, so far as one could gather, he was concerned not so much to say what he thought himself, as to state the sort of

criticisms which are made by many whom he represents.

What I propose to do in the short time at my disposal is, therefore, to deal with some of those criticisms, and the first passage I am going to take is one in which Dr. Selbie said the Free Churches did not realise that they are committing the sin of schism. I do not think, judging from what came afterwards, that that expresses exactly what Dr. Selbie must have meant, for I read almost directly afterwards : " But what they do feel is that the disunion of the churches is a shame and a scandal in face of the great evils with which all the churches are confronted at the present time. . . . They are not inclined to think so much about past divisions, as about the fact that we cannot close our ranks. . . . They feel that this hampers the whole work of the Kingdom of God." Now, if you realise that, you realise that to a certain extent, at any rate, there is a sin of schism, and you also realise that you are to some extent responsible for it. But I think that underlying these discussions there is a difference of definition. Dr. Selbie means that

the Free Churches are not entirely wrong in their attitude of separation from the Church of England and that they would not plead guilty to being described as schismatics because they had left the Church of England. Now, to my mind, schism means a division in the body—a division in the Christian Church; and if such division takes place, both sides are schismatics. In relation to the ideal the Anglicans are schismatics, just as the Congregationalists or Presbyterians or any other body. And if you ask what the sin of schism is, I would say it is doing anything which causes disunion, or prevents reunion—any malice, ill-feeling, improper controversy, unfairness, injustice, persecution, whatever it may be which makes differences. Whatever sinful action divides religious bodies one from another is the sin of schism, and I venture to think that if we look further into the past we shall find that we have all been guilty of the sin of schism. The first beginning of a better state of things must be to be prepared mutually to say, “We have sinned in the past, we have all been guilty of the sin of schism, and we pray to God to give

us strength to mend our ways and to work for reunion."

The next criticism I am going to deal with is the following. Dr. Selbie says: "Free Churchmen feel that ever since Lambeth the emphasis has been too strongly laid on the side of order and organisation." That may be so, but if you think a moment you will see that there are practical reasons for this. For, in the first place, most of the divisions of Christendom with which we have to deal have been caused by questions of order. You can see that, if you think of the names which are now used to describe our differences. What are the divisions of Christianity?—Papacy, Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, Congregationalism and so on. Each one of these represents a question of order. It is quite obvious that the problems of order are some of the most important that we have to approach.

But further, Dr. Selbie goes on to say that the various conferences held show that in all substantial matters there is unity of faith. That, I think, is true. The divisions of Christians at the present time are not divisions

so far as faith goes between the Church of England and the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians, and so on ; but they are divisions which run through all the different bodies, divisions which arise from such questions as Modernism, the doctrine of the Atonement, the best method of stating the doctrine of the Incarnation. On all these points the divisions are within the different religious bodies, and not between one body and another ; and on the fundamental facts of belief in Jesus Christ there is a great body of substantial unity. If that is so ; if he recognises and we recognise that there is this great unity, what we have to do is to try to express it in action. It is the need of expressing that unity, the one faith through the one society, that makes the discussion of questions of order necessary.

And when you come to discuss the question of order, I think there is a very great problem before all Christian people, and before the United Church of the future ; and that is to decide exactly how much unity of order is required. On the one side you have the Roman Catholic Church. Now if any of you

were to look at the Roman Canon Law you would see that there you have a church with a very elaborate and very carefully-worked-out system of order, penetrating into every particular relation of life. Then, on the other side, Dr. Selbie's own Church, the Congregationalists, would represent very much the opposite way of looking at things—the great stress laid on congregational liberty, on individuality, the fear of checking the life of the Spirit by the influence of a bureaucracy. Here, then, is the problem before us: What amount of unity of order is there necessary in the Christian Church? On the one side, undoubtedly, we require *some* order. If the whole of the Christians in England are to be united together in one society you must have some sort of system of order. On the other side, I suppose, we all dread the evils of anything like bureaucracy. Therefore the problem before us is, What amount of order do we really require in the Christian Church in the future? And the only thing I will say in answer to that is, "Let us turn our eyes to the early Church." There you have a good

coherent system of order, but you have very great elasticity, very great initiative, great power of adaptation to new circumstances; and I venture to think that if we study that representation of the Christian order we shall get the best guide to what we require in the Church of the future.

Dr. Selbie dealt next with another difficult paragraph in the report, which I shall read in a minute, and says are we going to de-Christianise the Society of Friends? The paragraph which caused him difficulty, and which was expounded with great care by the Archbishop of York, states: "The marks which ought to characterise the Church visible on earth are possessed by these existing separate Churches and societies of Christian people in very varying degrees of completeness or defect. Hence, even though they be parts of the visible Church, they cannot be considered as all alike giving equally adequate expression to the Lord's Mind and Purpose. Some, indeed, may be so defective that they cannot rightly be judged to be parts of that Church. But such judgments, though made

in trust that they are in accordance with the Divine Mind, must be regarded as limited to the sphere of the visible Church as an ordered society here on earth. It would be presumption to claim that they have a like validity in the sphere of the whole Church as the One Body of the redeemed in Christ, for within that sphere judgment can only be given by the All-knowing Mind and Sovereign Mercy of God" (I. 9).

Now I venture to think that Dr. Selbie, or those friends of his whom he represents, have read that paragraph with the wrong emphasis. The object of that paragraph is not to de-Christianise any particular society, but to say that even if it cannot unite with us we do not de-Christianise it. Cast our minds forward into the future, and think of the United Christian Church. However wide you draw the line, however broad your limits, undoubtedly there will be some Christian bodies that will not be able to come in. I doubt very much whether it would be possible for us to conceive the introduction of the Unitarians into such a body. As regards the Society of Friends, I doubt

very much whether they would wish to come in. The very condition of their existence is that they are not a church, and do not wish to be part of a church. Therefore, quite clearly, whatever efforts you make, some will be outside ; and what this paragraph says is that those judgments which we are obliged to make as regards the visible Church are human judgments made in relation to human conditions ; and that they are not judgments within the sphere of reality ; that we do not say, because they cannot come in with us, that therefore we condemn them. Whether they are condemned is not a matter for us to determine. We leave that to the all-knowing judgment of God.

That has been the great mistake the Christian Church has made in the past. If you are to have an ordered Church, you must have your conditions of admission. The ordered Society of the Christian Church has inherited from our Lord the tradition that the condition of admission is to be baptism ; but for this reason or that, there have always been in the past, and there are now, some calling themselves

Christians, believing themselves to be Christians, who are not baptised, and who have not sought baptism. If you read old theologians you will find that they often teach that those who are not baptised cannot be saved. For example, there was a controversy in the old days as to whether or not an unbaptised infant could be saved or not. All these are instances of the mistakes which people have made in thinking that the judgments that we make, and are bound to make with regard to the Christian Society, should be recognised as God's judgments. It has been part of the presumption of theologians in the past. It is our business and duty, actuated as we believe by God's Spirit, to build up our Church in the way we think best ; but, if there are any we exclude we must not consider that we have any right to claim for ourselves the functions of the Divine Judge.

The next question that Dr. Selbie asked was, What is a 'representative and constitutional' Episcopate? "Is it just the representation that we have in our churches at the present time, or does representative mean apostolic suc-

cession, or the representation which is derived through and gathered from the general history of the Church?" I think that, so far as we can judge, many of those Nonconformists, and some Church people who have read these findings, have been a little frightened by what they might be committed to. They have said: "There are questions you have not answered." That is quite true. There are questions that we deliberately did not answer, because it was felt that the first necessity was to get the conception of the Church, the Ministry, and the Creed—to get the big principles settled; and if the attempt that we had made to settle these big principles found favour with the great body of people, then we might go on to apply it to individual cases. And that is exactly what has happened with regard to the Episcopacy. Now what do we mean by a Representative Episcopacy? We mean one which will come with the whole authority of the Christian Church. We mean that when a person is appointed to the ministry he will have behind him the authority of the Church as a whole. And that authority has always been given in

the past through Episcopal ordination. Ideally, what happens is that a diocese elects its bishop ; the bishop, elected by the diocese, is presented for consecration to the bishops of the province, the bishops of the province being representative of the Church as a whole. The bishop therefore thus elected and consecrated is the representative both of his own diocese and the Church as a whole. That, to me, is the meaning of what is called the Apostolic Succession. There has been the idea that through a particular channel grace has come down from Apostolic times—that, I believe, has been a mistaken conception. Apostolic Succession means that the bishop appointed is consecrated with the authority of the whole Church ; and I look forward in the future, if we have a united church, to ordinations and consecrations which will come with the authority of each separate portion as well as of the Church of England—the presbyters, the ministers of the different separate churches, joining with us in the laying on of hands. And so you would get a Representative Ministry—a ministry representative not only of one tradition

of the Christian Church, but of all traditions ; and the ministry, which is now divided, would be again united.

And that leads on to the next question : What is meant by the phrase, "episcopal ordination" ? Dr. Selbie says that in the Free Churches great stress is laid on the calling by the Spirit, and that this vocation is very fully tested. Then he goes on : "But the actual act of ordination we regard as a purely human thing." Now I really do not think, when he says that, he says what his Church really thinks ; because directly after I read : "The whole matter of ordination is at once so simple and solemn that we cannot use the word in a double sense. . . . 'Commission' we can understand, but re-ordination we cannot." But if ordination were a purely human thing, neither I, nor they, nor anyone would mind being re-ordained ; but we mind being re-ordained because ordination is a great deal more than a purely human thing. We agree quite thoroughly with the Nonconformist Churches in insisting on the calling by the Spirit. The very first question asked in the Anglican

ordination is, "Do you trust that you are inwardly called by the Holy Ghost?" And we test it as much as they; but, like them, we ordain with the laying-on of hands; and we mean by that, not only that we give a solemn commission, but that we all unite in prayer to God. The ordination with laying-on of hands is but a symbolic prayer. The essence of the ordination lies in the prayer. We pray that God will give to the one we are ordaining His Grace for the great work to which he is called. And if you recognise that prayer is the essence of an ordination, I think you will feel that we are really all ultimately agreed together about its infinite importance.

But now comes that difficult question of re-ordination. On the one side, Nonconformist ministers say: "We have a commission, and we have God's Spirit, we believe, and we have tested it again and again by its spiritual blessings." And we agree with them; that is what the Lambeth Conference has said. Then they go on to say: "We think it would be untrue to our calling if we submit to any re-ordination." I think they are quite right. We

Anglican clergy would not accept any form of re-ordination for the sake of reunion with the Eastern Church or the Church of Rome, and we have no right to ask for the same from others.

Then from the other side there are clergymen in the Church of England who say : " We will not submit to the Sacraments being celebrated in our Church by one who has not received Episcopal Ordination ; " and again, I think, that from the point of view of Church order their position is very likely a just and a right one. But how are we to adjust these two points of view ?

I do not believe that the difficulty is as great as people think. Supposing reunion was to come between the Church of England and the Eastern Churches, it would mean a mutual acceptance of one another's Orders, but I am quite certain that no Anglican clergyman would be able to celebrate in an Eastern Church, nor an Eastern clergyman in an Anglican Church.

In the Roman Church there has been reunion, and the Church of Rome recognises the orders of the Reunited or Uniate Churches

quite completely, but there is no "mixture of rites," as it is called. A priest of the Greek rite is not allowed to celebrate according to the Latin rite, nor a priest of the Latin rite to celebrate according to the Greek rite. If that be so, I see no reason why, in the immediate future, we should not reunite on just similar conditions. We might have intercommunion; we might preach in one another's churches, and unite in all good works; but those who are ordained for the Presbyterian or any other rite will celebrate according to their own rite in their own churches. There is nothing derogatory in that to them or to us; and it may lead to something much more in the future. But I would put that before you as a solution which would meet the difficulties in this situation.

Then we come to the question of the Creeds. Dr. Selbie reminds us that in the Congregational Church there has always been great reluctance to impose Creeds upon anyone. "The Church must be able to point to certain documents, saying: "There is our faith," and the Nicene Creed is, perhaps, as good as any other

for the moment, but it will not do to make them impositions on any. The day is gone for that ; and if ever we come to frame a constitution for the reunited Church, we shall, I hope, take a broader line than seems to be indicated in these statements which I have been reading." I think that what was most remarkable in Dr. Scott Lidgett's address was the way in which he recommended the Nicene Creed as the basis of the reunited Church. The attitude of the Congregationalists is not without justification. If I look back into the history of the Christian Church, and particularly to the time of the Reformation, I would say quite definitely that one of the chief causes of Christian disunion has been the over-elaboration of dogmatic formulæ ; but in all these things there must be some balance of judgment. We must unite together on one faith. That must be the basis ; and we must be able to express that faith objectively ; and we must have a reasonable ground for thinking that the great body of our people accept that faith. Again I would suggest a solution. We should recognise that the basis of union must be the acceptance of

the faith of Christ. We are not Christians because we believe the Nicene Creed, but because we believe the faith which is expressed in the Nicene Creed. Therefore I would suggest that we take, as the terms of our faith, assent to the creeds, expressed in some such way as this: "We accept the faith of Christ as it is taught in the Holy Scriptures, and as it has been handed down to us in the Creed of the Church." If you were to call upon everyone to make some such declaration as that, you would be securing the unity of our faith, leaving full freedom for interpretation, and would take care that the emphasis was not on this or that particular document, but that the emphasis was on the faith of Christ, which is something for our heart and conscience as well as our intellect.

Another difficulty raised was this: "We realise the tremendous struggle that is going on between Anglo-Catholicism, on the one hand, and Protestant Anglicanism, whether of the Evangelical or the liberal type, on the other, and we are wondering very much which party is going to win." The Church of England

consists of a great body of clergy and laity, and there are a certain number of people—whom we call “extremists,” if you like—who beat drums and hold conferences and so on, and who bulk very largely in the public mind. I am sure that the bulk of the Church of England is Christian and Church of England, and is not attached to any party primarily. But what is to be the Church of the future? Is it to be Protestant or Catholic? I do hope that we shall realise that the time must come when these old badges shall cease to be reality. The Church of the future is to be neither Protestant nor Catholic, but Christian; and it is to unite in itself the whole of the Christian tradition—both that part preserved by Protestants, and that part preserved by Catholics.

That is what we are going to build up. We are not going to perpetuate any of these distinctions and divisions that have come down from the past. Both Protestantism and Catholicism had their work to do, and both were imperfect. The Church of the future must be one which includes in itself the whole of the Christian tradition, and which transcends

all these temporary divisions which have done so much to create schism in the Church.

And then one more question: "If the reunited Church is to take the form that seems to be accepted by many at the present time, it will be such an extraordinarily big, strong, conglomerate body that it is almost unthinkable that such a body should be in the same relation to the State as that held by the Anglican Church to-day." Here again I think we must have faith in the future. Our reunited Church will have these problems to solve. But in the first place the relation of the Church of England to the State has not always been the same at all times. It is quite different now from what it was three or four years ago. A greater revolution has been carried out by the Enabling Act than by anything which Dr. Selbie contemplates. A form of self-government has been given to the Church which must profoundly modify the English Church as a whole and its relation to the State. But do not let us think for a moment that we can do without an establishment. Every Christian Society which owns property is in certain ways established.

Take the United Methodist body. In order to unite it was necessary to make arrangements for the disposal of the property owned by both sides, and an Act of Parliament had to be obtained ; and the constitution and principles of that body are enshrined in an Act which enabled the two bodies to be united together. In Scotland, when the Free Church and the United Presbyterians came together, they required an Act of Parliament. You cannot hold property without having dealings with the State. But if you have this great united body of Christians in this country it will be and must be a great National Church. It must be connected with the national life in every direction ; and though we look forward to it being full of freedom, of life, and of energy and independence, yet we feel that the connection with the great body of the people cannot be given up. Establishment is not something that we can give up.

Just let us, in conclusion, dwell upon three main points. And the first is, let us realise that in the work we are attempting there is to be no inadequate motive. We ask that the Christian

Church should be reunited because we feel that in no other way can the full ideal of Christianity be carried out, and that ideal I would sum up in the word Brotherhood. The aim of Christianity is to band together, in the unity of one Church, all peoples and nations ; and unless you are united, that brotherhood in Christ is only very imperfectly realised.

Secondly, in all we do let us have no limited aim. We are thinking at present particularly of the relations between the Church of England and the Free Churches of this country ; but always keep casting your mind over the whole of the Christian Church—the Church of Rome, the Eastern Churches, and the Protestant Churches of the Continent. I am afraid that so long as the claims of the Papacy remain, even negotiations with the Church of Rome are impossible, though there is a very much better spirit in our mutual dealings with one another than there used to be. As regards the East, I am only going to ask you to read, side by side with the Church Unity Report, another document : “ Terms of inter-communion suggested between the Church of England and

the Churches in communion with her, and the Eastern Orthodox Church," also published by the S.P.C.K. Take those two documents and compare them with one another; for then you will be able to lift the problem to a wider horizon.

And then, lastly, what is to be the practical step which we can take at the present time? I think there is one quite practical step, and that is to get to know one another. For many years I have been in constant intercourse with leading members of the Nonconformist Churches; first on the Board of Studies of the University of London, and then at Oxford, where we have had a common work to do; and I think you will find that it is that union which has been brought about amongst theologians in England through their own work in Universities that has made the present *rapprochement* possible. I want that to be extended throughout the country and I want to see founded conferences of Christian ministers and laymen—those who are eager and keen about the extension of the name of Christ. And we want them to come together for two objects: first, for doing all those things which

we can do so well together, and secondly, for discussing points upon which we differ from one another. I am sure that if such conferences were to be held everywhere, the spirit of separation between us would change, and change very markedly.

And then let us remember that we must not only consult together, and work together, but we must pray together. If we once learn to pray together for our work, to pray together for Christian unity, to pray together for the extension of Christ's name, I think the barriers we have inherited from the past will be broken down, and very quickly there will be a new spirit and a new unity in English Christianity.

APPENDIX A

THE JOINT LAMBETH REPORT

THE Lambeth Conference of 1920 issued an *Appeal to all Christian People* on the subject of Church Unity. In the following year the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England issued a reply, endorsed by the National Free Church Council, under the title of *The Free Churches and the Lambeth Appeal*. On the basis of these two documents, the Federal Council, adopting a suggestion of the English Bishops, appointed twenty-five representatives of the Free Churches, including both ministers and laymen, with a view to a "Conference with the two Archbishops and with other members of the Church of England whom they may appoint." The Conference, as finally constituted, consisted of these twenty-five representatives with the two Archbishops, ten bishops and two Anglican doctors of divinity (Arthur Headlam and Walter Frere), and eventually proceeded to appoint a committee as follows: the Archbishop of York (Chairman), the Bishops of Gloucester (Gibson), Peterborough, Ripon and Salisbury, with Dr. Headlam, now Bishop of Gloucester, and Dr.

Frere, to consider "some of the issues involving large questions of principle" which the Conference had raised. The Report of this Committee, as accepted by the Conference at Lambeth Palace, is annexed.¹

I.—ON THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

1. The foundation of the Church rests not upon the will or consent or beliefs of men, whether as individuals or as societies, but upon the Creative Will of God.

2. The Church is the Body of Christ, and its constitutive principle is Christ Himself, living in His members through His Spirit.

3. As there is but one Christ, and one Life in Him, so there is and can be but one Church.

4. This one Church consists of all those who have been, or are being, redeemed by and in Christ, whether in this world or in the world beyond our sight, but it has its expression in this world in a visible form. Yet the Church, as invisible and as visible, is, by virtue of its one life in Christ, one.

5. This visible Church was instituted by Christ as a fellowship of men united with Him, and in Him with one another, to be His witness and His instrument in the spread of His Kingdom on earth.

¹ By courtesy of S.P.C.K., the official publishers.

6. As a visible Church it must possess certain visible and recognisable marks whereby it can be seen and known by men. These have been since the days of the Apostles at least the following : (*a*) The profession of faith in God as revealed and incarnate in Christ ; (*b*) the observance of the two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself ; (*c*) an ideal of the Christian life protected by a common discipline ; (*d*) a ministry, representative of the Church, for the preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, and the maintenance of the unity and continuity of the Church's witness and work (See II, 1).

7. Baptism is by the ordinance of Christ and of His Apostles the outward and visible sign of admission into membership of the Church.

8. The Church visible on earth ought to express and manifest to the world by its own visible unity the one Life in Christ of the one Body.

9. The true relation of the Church and local Churches is that which is described in the New Testament—namely, that the Churches are the local representatives of the One Church. The actual situation brought about in the course of history in which there are different and even rival denominational Churches inde-

pendent of each other and existing together in the same locality, whatever justification arising out of historical circumstances may be claimed for these temporary separations, cannot be regarded as in accordance with the Purpose of Christ, and every endeavour ought to be made to restore the true position as set forth in the New Testament.

10. The marks which ought to characterise the Church visible on earth are possessed by these existing separate Churches and societies of Christian people in very varying degrees of completeness or defect. Hence, even though they be parts of the visible Church, they cannot be considered as all alike giving equally adequate expression to the Lord's Mind and Purpose. Some, indeed, may be so defective that they cannot rightly be judged to be parts of that Church. But such judgments, though made in trust that they are in accordance with the Divine Mind, must be regarded as limited to the sphere of the visible Church as an ordered society here on earth. It would be presumption to claim that they have a like validity in the sphere of the whole Church as the One Body of the redeemed in Christ, for within that sphere judgment can only be given by the All-knowing Mind and Sovereign Mercy of God.

II.—THE MINISTRY

1. A ministry of the Word and Sacrament is a Divine ordinance for the Church, and has been since the days of the Apostles an integral part of its organised life.

2. It is a ministry within the Church exercising representatively, in the Name and by the authority of the Lord Who is the Head of the Church, the powers and functions which are inherent in the Church.

3. It is a ministry of the Church, and not merely of any part thereof.

4. No man can take this ministry upon himself. It must be conferred by the Church, acting through those who have authority given to them in the Church to confer it. There must be not only an inward call of the Spirit, but also an outward and visible call and commission by the Church.

5. It is in accordance with Apostolic practice and the ancient custom of the Church that this commission should be given through Ordination, with prayer and the laying-on of hands by those who have authority given to them to ordain.

6. We believe that in Ordination, together with this commission to minister, Divine Grace is given through the Holy Spirit in response

to prayer and faith for the fulfilment of the charge so committed.

7. Within the many Christian Communion into which in the course of history Christendom has been divided, various forms of ministry have grown up according to the circumstances of these several Communion and their beliefs as to the Mind of Christ and the guidance of the New Testament. These various ministries of Word and Sacrament have been, in God's providence, manifestly and abundantly used by the Holy Spirit in His work of "enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints." But the differences which have arisen with regard to the authority and functions of these various forms of ministry have been and are the occasion of manifold doubts, questions, and misunderstandings. For the allaying of doubts and scruples in the future, and for the more perfect realisation of the truth that the ministry is a ministry of the Church, and not merely of any part thereof, means should be provided for the United Church which we desire, whereby its ministry may be acknowledged by every part thereof as possessing the authority of the whole body.

8. In view of the fact that the Episcopate was from early times and for many centuries accepted, and by the greater part of Christen-

dom is still accepted, as the means whereby this authority of the whole body is given, we agree that it ought to be accepted as such for the United Church of the future.

9. Similarly, in view of the place which the Council of Presbyters and the Congregation of the faithful had in the constitution of the early Church, and the preservation of these elements of presbyteral and congregational order in large sections of Christendom, we agree that they should be maintained with a representative and constitutional Episcopate as permanent elements in the order and life of the United Church.

10. The acceptance of Episcopal Ordination for the future would not imply the acceptance of any particular theory as to its origin or character, or the disowning of past ministries of Word and Sacrament otherwise received, which have, together with those received by Episcopal Ordination, been used and blessed by the Spirit of God.

III.—THE PLACE OF THE CREED IN A UNITED CHURCH

1. In a united Church there must be unity of Faith, which implies both the subjective element of personal adhesion and an objective standard of truth.

2. The supreme standard of truth is the revelation of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as summed up in Jesus Christ.

3. As the Church in its corporate capacity confesses Christ before men, there should be in the United Church a formal statement of its corporate faith in Christ as an expression of what is intellectually implied by its confession of Him.

4. The Creed commonly called Nicene should be accepted by the United Church as the sufficient statement of this corporate faith. The manner and occasions in which the Creed is to be used should be determined by the United Church.

5. With regard to a confession of faith at Baptism, the United Church would be justified in using the Creed which has been for centuries the Baptismal Creed of the Western Church, commonly called the Apostles' Creed. Its use at Baptism would imply recognition of the corporate faith of the Church therein expressed as the guide and inspiration of the Christian life.

6. The use of the Creeds liturgically in the public worship of the Church should be regarded as an expression of corporate faith and allegiance; and the United Church should be

prepared to recognise diversities of use in this as in other liturgical customs.

7. When assent to the Creeds is required by the United Church, such assent should not be understood to imply the acceptance of them as a complete expression of the Christian Faith, or as excluding reasonable liberty of interpretation. It should be understood to imply the acceptance of them as agreeable to the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures, as affirming essential elements in the Christian Faith, and as preserving that Faith in the form in which it has been handed down through many centuries in the history of the Christian Church.

8. While we thus recognise the rightful place of the Creeds in the United Church, we also recognise most fully and thankfully the continued Presence and Teaching of the Living Spirit in His Body, and emphasise the duty of the Church to keep its mind free and ready to receive from Him in each day and generation ever-renewed guidance in the apprehension and expression of the truth.

APPENDIX B

THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER

A CONFERENCE representative of almost all Christian Communion throughout the world is to meet at Washington, U.S.A., if possible on the first Monday in May, 1925, or on some later convenient date. In 1910, the General Convention of the American Episcopal Church appointed a commission with the object of inviting the co-operation of all Christians in promoting such a conference. In August, 1920, official representatives of seventy-eight churches, distributed over forty nations, met at Geneva, to discuss fundamental questions, and appointed a Continuation Committee to prepare the way for, and ultimately to assemble the Washington Conference. Local groups of members of different churches are now studying the fundamental questions raised at Geneva, substantially the same as those covered by the Lambeth Report, and the reports furnished by these conferences will form a basis for Washington, 1925. The aim of the World Conference is, on a larger scale, identical with

that of the Joint Conference at Lambeth ; not, that is, to formulate a scheme of Christian Reunion, but so to prepare the ground that churches themselves may take action upon the reports, which will be the issue of its discussions. Meanwhile, it ought not to be forgotten that the work of reuniting separated churches is already in progress ; that notable reunions have already occurred among non-episcopal churches ; and that negotiations at various stages of development are proceeding in England, Scotland, India, and elsewhere. The President of the Continuation Committee is Dr. C. H. Brent, Bishop of Western New York ; the Secretary, Mr. R. H. Gardiner, 174, Water Street, Gardiner, Maine, U.S.A. An excellent bibliography will be found in a pamphlet issued by the Committee and entitled *Hopeful Conferences in England and Australia*. Special attention may be directed to Neville Talbot's *Thoughts on Unity* (3s. 6d.), and Malcolm Spencer's *Impasse or Opportunity* (3s.), both published by the Student Christian Movement ; also to the Bishop of Bombay's *The Great Church Awakes* and Dr. T. R. Glover's *The Free Churches and Reunion*.



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